CELIA

IN SEARCH OF A HUSBAND.

VOL. I.

Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall Street.

Serfojee Rajah. 1827

CELIA

IN SEARCH OF A HUSBAND.

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BY A MODERN ANTIQUE.

" There wanted yet the master-work, the end
Of all yet done; a creature, who not prone
And brute as other creatures, but endued
With sanctity of reason, — —
— — — and from thence
Magnanimous, to correspond with Heaven,
But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
Descends."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.
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PREFACE.

THE title-page prefixed to this book bears a strong appearance of *presumption*; and the reader of these pages may, in the *conclusion*, pronounce the author both *vain* and futile. The *only* apology she has to offer may probably lead her yet deeper into error; yet she cannot resist saying something of herself, or rather of her motives.

Cœlebs had appeared—it *would* be *answered*; but it must be answered *directly*—a long life, even blessed with *superior talents*, would scarcely produce a work, whose *intrinsic* worth could class it with that performance.

The reader very naturally asks, *why* answer it at all?—There are many reasons which induce persons to write. Doctor Johnson has said of this species of writing, "that it requires that experience which can never be attained by solitary diligence, but must arise from general converse, and accurate observation of the living world."

I believe it possible to *glean* a *little* worldly knowledge, without *mixing* in its haunts; and were such advantages *indispensible* in a writer,

"How many would starve, who now are fed!"

Extend your compassion towards this unfortunate class, courteous reader—consider, that what is "sport to *you*, is death to us."

It has, with much justice, been said, that "to tell the *public* you have written a book

in

in a hurry; that you do not *stop* to correct,"&c. &c., are impertinences, and not apologies to your readers.

Yet in this case some allowances should be made—The *garreteers* had taken scent—goose-quills and crow-quills were immersed; but the pen that writes quickest will suit the town best; for expectation is excited, and though it should be disappointed, we all know that

"Anticipation loads the wings of time."

But I, and with humility I avow it, I anticipate those *dart*-like *quills*, dipped in *gall*—the Reviewers; yes, I *feel* they will—though I profess myself an *antique*, they will not spare me. But to the Public I would beg to say, that if I cannot *edify* by the elevation of my style, I trust I shall not *dismay*, by pourtraying characters not to

be found in this transitory state. The business of life is not transacted in pompous language, nor the speeches of *all* lovers made in verse. The novel-writer is engaged in portraits, in which every one knows the original, and can detect any deviation from exactness of resemblance—other writings are safe, except from the malice of *learning*, but these are in danger from every reader.

If *I* have deviated from Nature, I need say nothing; I shall *hear* of that, and every other failing of my presumptuous pen—but if the Ladies, for whom I write, if *they* should give me a *patient* reading, not put me on the *shelf* from *Sunday* to *Sunday*, I shall be grateful, and in this *hope* beg to subscribe myself

Their obedient Servant,

A MODERN ANTIQUE.

CELIA.

CHAP. I.

> "These are thy glorious works, Parent of good;
> Almighty, thine this universal frame!"

"THOUGH each new hour illustrates the bounty of Providence, the spring season seems peculiarly to claim our regard, our gratitude," said Mrs. Martha Mansfield to Celia Delacour, as they sauntered in the budding garden attached to the demesne of Hadley. "So lately the earth was bare, and now not a path is unadorned; gracious Nature decks

> "Her universal face with smiling green."

Celia was alive to the beauties of Nature; there is but *one reference* for the creatures of *this* world, and *who* that ever sought it, sought in *vain?* Now Celia worshipped the *source*—thus its streams were her delight.

They were yet discoursing on the unsating theme, when Jacob Brown, the butler of Mrs. Mansfield, announced "Sir Harry Townly;" and in the next moment, a fashionable-looking man advanced to receive the sincere congratulations of the ladies.

"You did not come alone?" said Mrs. Mansfield.

"Where is Fanny?" asked Celia.

"Fanny has been ill," replied Sir Harry.

"And the children?" said Mrs. Mansfield.

"We have *lost* our boy," said the Baronet, in a faltering voice; "but Rachel is blooming and healthy as ever."

"Poor Fanny!" interjoined Celia. "Are you sure, my dear Townly, that in- dis-

disposition does not detain her from us now?"

"Quite sure, Celia; she is recovering; she has recovered her spirits wonderfully."

"Thank God!" said Celia; "it must have been a sad trial."

"A very sad one as a mother, no doubt, Celia," said Mrs. Mansfield; "but as a *Christian*, I trust she is too wise to yield to immoderate grief."

The Baronet was silent for a moment. Dismissing the "cast of thought" that had stolen over his features, he avowed himself fatigued, and disposed to take refreshment—they retired to the house.

"I have a petition to prefer," said Sir Harry to Mrs. Mansfield; "you will spare Celia to us for a few months—perhaps you will *both* go under my escort—Fanny is most anxious to see ye."

Mrs. Mansfield hesitated—"At such a time to refuse," said she, "seems selfish. For *myself*, unless the health of my niece requires it, I should certainly wish to avoid visiting

visiting the metropolis—and, though I cannot withhold my consent, it is a fearful separation, Townly. Celia has never been absent from my sight one day—nay, I must ask of you certain *terms* for my novice in the ways of society."

Sir Harry smiled; yet he acceded to the restrictions imposed.

"In all essential matters," said Mrs. Mansfield, "I leave her to her own judgment; but in those particulars which custom imposes, I must guard her against yielding. Fanny, from education and disposition, was in a manner self-taught, ere she entered on the world in her present character. Let no example," continued Mrs. Mansfield, addressing our heroine, "induce you to keep *late hours*; adopt no *fashion* that your *delicacy* condemns; *add* none of those superficial *attractions*, which the *great* world term *accomplishments*, to your present *simple* hoard of information; to be *rational*, is to be happy; the wants of the *moderate* are few—thus their grati-

tude

tude is ever flowing, for they are awake to the never-slumbering eye of Providence. I know, that no *material* change could be effected in my Celia; but there is a species of acquiescence, that is termed the '*usage of society*,' from which, if a young woman *dissents*, she must make up her feelings to bear the contumely of the worldly votary; yet *you* must do this, Celia—*late hours* will draw you from God; your bodily fatigue will incapacitate you for that humility, and entire devotion, which should accompany your orisons; and when you should return from these nocturnal revels, when the day is dawning on your sight, and you should, with your accustomed piety, look to the orient beam, and ask

"———————— if the night
Have gathered ought of evil, or concealed,
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark."

Even though you do this, you have inverted the order of Nature; you will carry the system onwards; next day, 'the fatal pre-

cedent will plead,' till *habit* eradicates what your youth, and hitherto blameless life, has so fondly promised."

Celia wept unrestrainedly; yet they were not the tears of a woman who had fears as to her stability in these points. She might have humbled herself, and asked the illumination that is "promised the ignorant," had she been told that her *moral* sense was imperfect, that her gratitude was inefficient. It was the strong conviction she owned, that the advice thus offered, the observances thus recommended, had often, with equal tenderness, been addressed to her sister; they had made no impression; and while our heroine, in few, but emphatic words, declared her intention of abiding in the path that had made her youth happy, and gained the approval of her affectionate protectress, that pleasure she anticipated in a meeting with a sister whom she loved, with all her faults, was greatly diminished—"Sorrow softens and subdues the loftiest mind," said Celia, mentally; "my dear Fanny has suffered

since

since I saw her." She took courage on a certainty so soothing, yet the tears would flow.

Sir Harry avowed himself a convert to the arguments of Mrs. Mansfield; he believed that the happiness of this life depended upon a strict discharge of our moral duties; but, at the same time, declared, that a married man, unless united to a woman whose sentiments were congenial, must forego his *own* opinions, in order to guard his *honour*.

Mrs. Mansfield started—" Is this a *general* or an *individual* opinion, Townly?"

" Oh, a *general* one, to be sure," said the Baronet.

Yet Celia *thought* that his ingenuous brow was lighted by a blush, which, though *reflected* on *her* cheek, was rejected by her virtuously proud heart—for Lady Townly was the *sister* of Celia Delacour.

The consent of Mrs. Mansfield thus attained, Sir Harry expressed his inten-

tion of returning to London in two days. This, on the first mention, seemed impossible to Celia; yet a little reflection told her it was best, for every hour evinced the anxiety that the separation caused her aunt. She arose early on the next morning, and making a round of *calls*, which in London would have proved an excessive fatigue, for all her *friends* were at *home*, she imparted to the surprised and afflicted villagers (and it was in this class she was visiting) her purposed departure—"Be careful of my aunt," was her parting injunction to each. To the promises that the season held forth, she made appropriate comments—"the pasture seemed good, and the corn had sprouted;" she had been used to administer to their wants, and was qualified to judge of their gains. One aged man, whose nourishment had often been conveyed by her hands, wept in despair, as she assured him that Mrs. Wilkins the housekeeper had promised to take her place

place during her absence—"Every thing shall be done as usual," said Celia; "Wilkins is very kind."

"No doubt, no doubt," said old Godfrey; "but she cannot read to me as you do; I fear I am selfish—ah Madam! it is since you explained to me such things as I did not understand, that I have been so happy."

Celia was affected by the zealous gratitude of her humble friend; and secretly resolving to recommend old Godfrey to the particular care of her aunt, she returned to the house.

Sir Harry, though accustomed to a life of dissipation, possessed a mind capable of appreciating the beauties of Nature. It was on the second morning after his arrival at Hadley, that, having made a circuit through the village, he, in his way back, rested at the cottage of old Godfrey. There is something peculiarly interesting in that class of persons, to be met in

many

many of the cultivated villages of this island—we do not speak of manufacturing counties, but the smiling hamlet that skirts the mansions of some munificent guardians of the poor, who, while they shield them from real ills, are active to inculcate the necessity and virtue of industry—to see the inhabitants of such a spot cheerful and content, pursuing their daily toil, with hearts void of care, gaining "sufficient for the day," owning a *resource* in the "*great house*," for any contingence that *sickness, accident*, or the season's "chilling blight," may effect." If there is an enviable rank in life, it is that of a country gentleman, who draws his riches from the ground he cultivates, and makes his treasure the garner of the poor.

Sir Harry took a seat at the door of old Godfrey; he spoke of the manor-house; Godfrey was eloquent in praise of Mrs. Mansfield—"She will be very sad when Miss Celia leaves her," said Godfrey; "and we shall

shall all be sad—I wish her London friends knew how happy she is here, and they would not have taken her from us."

Sir Harry was replying, when, looking towards the door, he beheld the subject of their conversation approaching; she was walking slow, and with evident caution. Sir Harry drew back, while Godfrey, placing his spectacles to aid his view, declared it was Miss Celia, bringing him some broth—"This may be the last I shall ever get from her dear hands," continued Godfrey, in visible emotion.

Celia entered the cottage—"I thought you would like me to bring it while I could," said she—"Ah, Townly! so you have discovered my old friend?" continued Celia, as she placed the bason on the table, and took a seat by the venerable cottager.

Sir Harry regarded our heroine in silence for a minute—"What would Fanny say to this?" said he thoughtfully—"Celia, it is to you I look for comfort; you will recal my thoughtless girl."

Celia

Celia saw the mental inquietude of the Baronet with affectionate concern—yet it was a subject on which she could not speak—if she entered into his feelings, she must throw censure on her sister; but as she retrod the path to the manor-house, after bidding adieu to Godfrey, she drew the general plan by which she purposed to live during her residence in town, with so much simplicity, that, while Sir Harry smiled his gracious approval, he *wondered*, as the plan was merely *rational*, that every rational being did not pursue the same. He forgot that there are *degrees* of *rationality*; that there are creatures who own the *distinction*, yet elicit no emanation of reason—who suffer the " tares to grow up," until the soil is choked.

The next morning, while at breakfast, Mrs. Mansfield repeated her wishes with regard to our heroine—" I am explicit in your presence, my dear Townly," continued the anxious friend, " that Celia may be exonerated from prudery in every particular.

ticular. I know no error into which young people so readily fall, as the feeling of *false* shame. I do not suspect Celia, for she is ingenuous and humble; but the life in which she will mix (moderately I trust), will call upon her to be firm—she must not be *laughed* out of her principles, nor is it necessary she should defend them; in the former, she would prove her weakness, in the latter, vanity alone could bear her out—it is by *retiring* from the crowd, and proving her *heart*, that she will preserve herself from the contagion of vice. Forgive me, my dear Harry," continued Mrs. Mansfield, " nor term me rigid; the times are sadly ' out of joint.' Into those circles that the world calls honourable, the most glaring *moral* errors have crept; and though my countrymen are justly styled *heroes*, I pronounce them deficient in *one* species of courage — they want *moral* courage, Townly. If they were as anxious to repel the advances of vice, as they would

be

be effectual in expelling the intrusion of an hostile foe, they would be 'fighting the good fight.' I have written Fanny a most enormous packet; I know she will smile," added Mrs. Mansfield; "but my heart was full, and I could not but tell her so. In my arrangement for Celia, I have intruded on your household—Patty and Richard must be her attendants; I shall be more at ease, as their worth is known to me. It is very probable that one or two of our country friends will claim a portion of my niece's time—Celia will act for herself on these occasions. Sir Peter Berton, and Mr. Walford's family, will be in London this season; they are persons in whose society she has always been happy."

Sir Harry promised to further the views of his affectionate relation, by considering the feelings of Celia.

The carriage drove up the avenue—Mrs. Mansfield caught her beloved child to her bosom—

bosom—" God protect you, my Celia!" sobbed the agitated friend.

Sir Harry drew our heroine from the arms of her more than parent, and in the next moment they were on the road to London.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

"I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments,
And Virtue has no tongue to check her pride."

THE road to London, enter it by what point you will, bears a strong similarity in the last five or six miles. There appears before you a mass of smoke, an atmosphere so heavy, as to surprise and oppress the rural child of Nature. Celia was sensible of this; nor were Richard and Patty, who followed in a chaise, inattentive observers of this (to them) extraordinary appearance. It was near seven o'clock in the evening of a clear, yet cold, day in April, that Celia Delacour entered the splendid mansion of Sir Harry Townly, situated in Portman-square.

The Baronet led the trembling Celia

to

to the drawing-room—her heart panted to embrace her sister—she fled from the tender restraint that his wish of surprising his Lady would have imposed; nor, till she had wept her joy on the neck of Lady Townly, perceived that she was in *company*.

Confused, and somewhat disappointed, our heroine dropped into a seat; for though Sir Harry had said that his Lady had recovered her spirits—the event was recent—none of the "trappings of woe" were visible in her Ladyship's appearance; yet Sir Harry was in black—she knew it was possible to wear

"———That within which passeth shew."

But real grief is retired; it vaunteth not in words; it is oppressed even by consolation; it has only *one* resource, one *balm*; and it is not in *society*, at least in *common* society, we can hope to find it.

"Miss Delacour," said Lady Townly, addressing

addressing the little party, " her *first* appearance in London; and I may add, literally, in ' search of a husband."

" Fanny," said the astonished Celia, " my dear Fanny !"

Sir Harry addressed his Lady—he begged to know how Rachel was ?—if she had retired for the night ?—how she had passed her time in his absence ?

To all of which Lady Townly replied carelessly; and turning to Celia, she attacked her " maiden blushes," as she called them, with that *ease* which the " *usage of society*" so peculiarly illustrates in a woman of fashion.

" You disown the imputed motive ?" said Lady Cardonnel, looking towards our heroine.

" Wholly, Madam," said Celia; " mine is a visit of condolence—of affection, I should say;" and again she blushed, for the allusion bore hard upon the thoughtless mother.

" You were always a dear affectionate

girl,"

girl," said Lady Townly, pressing the hand of her sister; "but really, Celia, your *Hadley* roses are highly becoming—a long lecture from aunt Mansfield, I suppose," she continued.

"I have a packet for you, Fanny," said the Baronet; "indeed, my dear, we are deeply indebted to that best of women, for her kind acquiescence in the present case."

"Oh certainly," said her Ladyship; "I will write my grateful thanks to-morrow."

"However Lady Townly's charge may be rejected by that young lady," said an intelligent handsome-looking man, past the bloom of youth, "I pronounce it in part just."

"Sir," said Celia, regarding the stranger with attention.

"Nay, hear me," continued Mr. Belford, taking a seat by our astonished Celia. "This is your first *debut* on the *theatre* of the world?"

Celia bowed.

"Then you are a *candidate* for *public* favour?"

"I a candidate for public favour!" said Celia with ingenuous warmth.

"Yes, undoubtedly you are; and you will attain it, in proportion as you perform your part. Have you fixed on the *character* you mean to sustain?" added Mr. Belford with a smile, that conveyed an infinity of meaning.

"Indeed, Sir," said Celia, in a voice by no means audible, "I know not how to reply to you," and her eyes glistened, from a feeling which Mrs. Mansfield herself could not have condemned—it was *real* shame, modest timidity.

"The very *cynosure* for those of her age," said Mr. Belford, taking the hand of our heroine, respectfully. "A London *audience* is a most incongruous medley, often *bought* up before the *candidate* appears. I understand a little of their *stage* tricks; permit me to be the *manager* for you; make

make no *engagements* without my concurrence."

Celia was impelled to smile; she perceived her new friend was a man who knew the world; his manners were persuasive, though his language was evidently satirical. Celia paused—" The satirist spares neither friend nor foe," said she, mentally; " yet it is the *world* of *fashion* he is satirizing—and is not *folly* the general *enemy* of all its votaries?" Her eye caught the features of her sister; they were disguised under a mask, which the morality of Celia termed criminal. She turned to Sir Harry, and, with an engaging smile, asked if he approved such a league?

" You could not do better, Celia," said the Baronet. " Belford will bring you *out* with an *eclat*, that aunt Martha would approve."

" Then I believe I may assent," said Celia.

Mr. Belford declared himself flattered by the permission, at the same time add-

ing, "that he should give her her *cues* in due order."

"When is the first rehearsal to be?" asked Lady Cardonnel.

"To-morrow morning."

"Belford, you will breakfast with us?" said Sir Harry.

Mr. Belford replied in the affirmative.

Our heroine, in a low voice, avowing herself fatigued, withdrew.

Lady Townly regarded her as she retired, and as the door closed—"What a fine carriage the girl has!" said she; "it is really astonishing! I do not know that she can dance. I fear your *candidate* will appear a very country Miss, Belford," continued her Ladyship. "She could make a *pie*, or a *pudding*, I believe; and I know she is a good sempstress, for I have some specimens of her ability in this way—but as to the attractions which strike the eye, she is sadly defective, I am persuaded."

Lady Cardonnel shrugged her shoulders—"With all deference to country ladies,

I must say, that they are in general very stupid, and not a little conceited. Forgive me, my dear Townly; I know you are not bigotted to this class of people; and I own that, to me, there is something vastly repulsive in their manners."

"If Lady Townly has entertained such an erroneous opinion," said Sir Harry, "she will blush to avow it a month hence."

"You must not mind him," said Lady Townly, addressing her fashionable friend; "you know he is fond of appearing eccentric; but the proof is before us—do you see any man of *rank* select these *natural* ladies? the reason is plain—there is a certain *je ne sais quoi*, an elegance, in a town-bred woman, with which a man of *fashion* cannot dispense."

Sir Harry and Mr. Belford laughed outright.

"And yet, after six or seven years of married misery," said Mr. Belford, "how many *men of fashion* deplore the folly of

their choice? For instance, when the *je ne sais quoi*, and elegance of his *wife* evinces itself in her *desertion* of himself and children, of what nature are his regrets? they may not lead him to fix on *any* spot, from which he *ought* to have selected his partner, but that he chose her for *qualities* unessential, if not *unbecoming*, in the woman who is termed *modest*; and it is not unreasonable to suppose, that as retiredness is the most graceful charm of woman, his reflections may lead him to draw conclusions, highly in favour of those females who have been reared remote from the contagion of this dissipated and immoral town."

"How moral you antiquated bachelors can talk!" said Lady Cardonnel; "but, my dear Sir, we never attend to such splenetic animals; that churlish system which must inevitably creep into the arrangement of your gloomy lives, disqualifies you to judge of *social* happiness."

"Social

"Social happiness!" said Sir Harry, with a sigh, "what a comprehensive term, and how little understood!"

Lady Townly looked thoughtful—she took the hand of the Baronet—"My dear Harry," said her Ladyship, "some men expect very unreasonable sacrifices."

"Sacrifices, Fanny! Alas! when a woman thinks her *duties* sacrifices, she misconceives the charm of *social* life."

"I exonerate you now, Belford," said Lady Cardonnel, rising; "I perceive that a *domestic* husband is much upon a par with a *disappointed* bachelor."

Lady Townly smiled languidly; Mr. Belford attended Lady Cardonnel to her carriage, and retired.

"Let me caution you, Fanny," said the Baronet to his Lady. "Celia appears to me the most perfect female I ever beheld; her feelings are quick, and though you cannot possibly mean *all* you say, she would be highly susceptible of such sarcasms, as I have with pain listened to this evening,

evening. She has no weak sensibility, but a very intelligent nature—we must not oppose her principles. I feel assured, that no example will displace the very solid advantages she possesses, in a plain and rational education: nay more, Fanny," continued the Baronet, with affectionate solicitude. "I ask of you, my love, to regard these advantages in their simple point of view. I would not disparage the woman I love, by supposing that she can be insensible to my anxiety for her happiness; the natural goodness of your disposition is a charm of which I am fully sensible—every thing is in our power—let us be happy in ourselves, nor depend on the *adventitious* aids that fashion imposes."

Lady Townly smiled through tears, and half promised to be a very good girl in future.

CHAP.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAP. III.

"They praise and they admire they know not what,
And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
And what delight to be by such extoll'd,
To live upon their tongues and be their talk,
Of whom to be disprais'd were no small praise."

Though the reception of Miss Delacour, on her arrival in Portman-square, was perfectly conformable to the "*usage of society*," Celia, as she withdrew to her chamber, was so simple as to contrast it with the usual custom at Hadley, where *she*, in her individual capacity, had been used to see *her* visitors to their apartment, and witness all the affectionate arrangements that real friendship deems indispensable.

"I suppose it is not consistent with town habits," said Celia; yet we know not that she rejected her country opinions.

She had passed two hours in the nursery

of

of Lady Townly next morning, ere any, save the nurse and her child, were visible.

The little Rachel, then in her fifth year, was soon made acquainted with the nature of our heroine's relationship; she had learned to call the affectionate Celia her dear aunt—had asked when she came, and how long she would stay—had told her that her poor brother Henry was gone to Heaven—and awakened the simplest (because the most natural) traits of sensibility, when Lady Townly's bell admonished the nurse that Miss Rachel might go down.

Celia sent her morning compliments to her sister, and asked if *she* might be admitted to her toilet?

Martin returned—"My Lady will be happy to see you, Madam."

Celia hastened to her Ladyship's dressing-room. No language could do justice to the astonishment of our unfashionable Celia, as she beheld the *system* of her Ladyship's toilet. When she saw the little Rachel present the *rouge* to her mother,

and heard the infantine exclamations of delight that the child evinced, as her mother *grew* into beauty, at *each* refinement in art, *affection*, *candour* demanded that she should say something: telling Martin that *she* would take charge of her young lady, she *dismissed one* observing witness of this (to our natural Celia) very immoral exhibition.

"My dear Fanny," said our artless heroine, "how can you reconcile yourself to the adopting of such customs?"

Lady Townly laughed—"When you have been married seven years, Celia, you will find it impossible to do without these aids."

"*I* may *never* marry," replied Celia; "and God forbid, that at any period of *my* life, I should forget that *every* deception is a fault."

"Ah! my good girl, you will be obliged to rescind; I will not offer an argument—*hot rooms*, *late hours*, and *general approbation*

bation of these innocent heighteners of beauty, must convert you in *time*."

"Never," said Celia; "I will not expose myself to the dangers you name; the *approbation* of the *sensualist* shall not offend my delicacy, for I will *avoid* the insidious *effrontery*; and if *Time* destroys *my* few claims to *natural* beauty, I will not *dare* the power of the *tyrant*, lest he punishes me for my presumption, and *antedates* my doom."

"What a prudish, dear, good girl you are, Celia!—quite on aunt Martha's plan, I perceive—*apropos*, she writes in a most impressive manner; if ever I might be forgiven the toilet's aid, it is *this* morning, for I have actually been crying over her epistle till I was quite hideous."

"I wish you had allowed *me* to judge for myself in this case," said Celia; "I am persuaded, Fanny, that you would to *me* have appeared infinitely more handsome than at present."

Lady

Lady Townly wanted faith in this particular, and Celia waved the argument.

They descended to the breakfast-room; where Sir Harry, and his friend Belford, were already seated.

It is admitted that the sex, generally speaking, look to most advantage by candle-light. Mr. Belford, if he had before entertained such an opinion, would have rejected it at this moment; for Celia, in her simple morning dress, with her hair gracefully confined by an *unadorned* comb, seemed to him the most natural and pleasing woman he had ever beheld.

"The manager is punctual, Celia," said the Baronet; "Belford has been here above an hour."

Celia smiled; while Mr. Belford declared, that though *he* should be disappointed to find she had revoked the *permission* granted him so lately, he yet believed there would be some *danger* in the task.

"If you think so," said Celia, with infinite

infinite simplicity, "I will grant you a release; indeed, upon reflecting, *I* think it is a hazardous plan."

Sir Harry and his friend smiled.

She had not *applied,* for she did not *understand,* the compliment.

"Make the tea, Celia," said Lady Townly, "while I skim the papers."

Rachel took a seat on her father's knee, while our heroine did the honours of the breakfast-table.

"What are the dangers which *you* apprehend in our *entrée?*" asked Mr. Belford.

"You said something about *eclat* last night," said Celia; "and *that* is against *my* principles."

"Admirable!" said Lady Townly, laughing immoderately; "the Dowager Lady Snowden is about to give her *fair* hand to the Honourable Mr. Bridoon. The withered automaton! I will call in Grosvenor-square this morning, and try to draw her out on the subject."

The gentlemen laughed immoderately.

Celia

Celia had nothing to say.

"This is *eclat*, Celia," said Sir Harry.

"Allow me to set you right," said Mr. Belford; "it was Townly who used the *term* you reject."

Celia admitted the assertion, and they conversed without reserve.

"My dear Celia," said Lady Townly, throwing the paper on one side, "you must yield in *one* point, that is, that though you may gloss the matter as you please, you are in search of a husband."

"Good Heavens, Fanny, let me intreat of you to consider my feelings. I declare I *never* entertained a thought of the kind; indeed, indeed, I should blush that any person could accuse me of an intention so derogatory to delicacy."

"Mere nonsense, child," rejoined her Ladyship; "if *we*, who are, in a manner, deputed to *bring you out*, have not the power to *hint* that you have a certain property, &c. &c. &c. what will become of you? *time* is getting on—you are *now* five years

years older than I was when *I* married; and what would you say, if, in a year or two, all the men *recollect* what a fine girl you *were*—how ill Townly and his wife managed, that they did not get you a husband, till they rouse your pride; and, in a fit of desperation, you *make* love to the curate of Hadley, or are forced to be the partner of some cynical bachelor, like my friend Belford."

Celia was too much discomfited by the *nonchalance* of her sister, to make any reply; while Mr. Belford, with appropriate admiration of our heroine's delicacy, which he termed the very essence of *virtuous pride*, avowed himself more than ever disposed to attend her *entré* into life. "You will be accused of this design," continued he to Celia, "even though Lady Townly should forbear to announce you in the way she names—a new face in the fashionable world excites a certain portion of curiosity; if the candidate is young and personable, *who* is she?—if she is *rich*, what a *divine*

a *divine creature!*—if *well connected, patronage* is the order of the day. Her *temper, education,* or *morals,* are seldom discovered, till *after* she is a wife—with what satisfaction to the possessors, the *times* eminently illustrate. I do not mean to excuse *my* sex," added Mr. Belford. "Men who, in the *persons, riches,* or *accomplishments,* of their wives, overlook their *moral* excellences, have no right to expect happiness, as if human life were as a summer's day—*all* sunshine. It is the *companion* in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow. The woman who, in her *duties,* exalts *herself,* and honours her husband——"

"I never can bear to hear that word *duty* brought into the wedded system," said Lady Townly; "it is contrary to that universal homage we ever demand."

"How mistaken!" said the Baronet—"Believe me, Fanny, I have blushed more for this absurd reserve which many women avow, than for any of those little flights that their vivacity induces, if no other reason

existed than that which the *divine* institute ordained, as the perfection of *human* happiness, where *acquiescence* is enjoined. Their *discernment* is impeachable. Duty is the *arms* of woman. What man possessed of feeling, can be insensible to the yielding sweetness of an affectionate heart? as Milton says,

> "Those graceful acts,
> Those thousand decencies, that daily flow
> From all her words and actions, mix'd with love,
> And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd
> Union of mind, or in us both one soul."

The subject, or the *feelings* of the Baronet, gave an impression to his manner so touching, as to call the genuine tear of sympathy into the eye of Celia. Mr. Belford took part in the sentiment; while Lady Townly, to whom it was addressed, though overpowered by its personality, felt it would be too much like *duty* to admit the conviction.—"Kiss your papa for me, Rachel," said her Ladyship, "and tell him, that the

serpent

serpent has stalked the earth since those happy days."

"Save *me* from the naughty *serpent*," said Rachel, as she twined her arms round his neck—"Will it bite, papa?"

"Will *you* save *this* creature from that *serpent* the *world?*" said the Baronet, as he placed his daughter in the arms of Celia, and hastened out of the room.

A pause ensued. Had decorum permitted, our heroine would have followed; for we do not hesitate to say, that her *sister*, at that moment, had no claim to her respect. Mr. Belford referred to the newspaper for a subject. Celia was a stranger to the *diurnal* prints, Mrs. Mansfield being content to receive all *current news* and *opinions* through the medium of a *weekly* paper. "This will suffice," said this excellent woman. "There is little to *instruct* in their pages, and much to *deplore*. The less we see of them the better."

Mr. Belford, however, soon called the

smiles on the features of Celia, as he read the motley composition.

"It must be difficult to decide *whom* to employ," said Celia, "where *all* excel so much."

"They are all excessively clever in their way," said Lady Townly: "*I* take them in turn.—That reminds me, Celia, that you must get some things this morning. Your gowns are very ill made, and your hair is inelegant. We must go to Ruspini: he must give me his opinion of your teeth. We will get the Gallery of Fashion, and you shall study costume. It is absolutely *indispensible* now."

"Not yet, Fanny," said our heroine, smiling; "of my dress we will speak hereafter: my teeth must *do* as they are; indeed I am very grateful that they have never as yet given me any pain: and as to costume, I *believe* I understand the *word*, but not the *necessity* of its admission to my toilet; when I do, you shall direct me."

"Why,

"Why, what did you come to London for?" asked Lady Townly, with a sarcastic glance.

"Townly said you wished for my *society*," replied Celia, with a look full of expression.

"So I did; and I am most grateful for my sister's attention to my wishes," said her Ladyship, with a cordiality that the quick feelings of our heroine, rather than her Ladyship's gratitude, induced.

At this moment, a well-dressed man entered the room. Celia rose: she considered him as a visitor. Lady Townly laughed. The man bowed, and presenting a paper to her Ladyship, she glanced over it. "It will do," said she: "we dine *en famille*." And Celia now understood it was the *man-cook*.

Our heroine laughed at her want of knowledge in regard to a fashionable establishment.—"Aunt Martha would lecture me, if *she* was to see poor Petit; but really he is an admirable creature, in his way," said her Ladyship.

"What a respectable body of people the servants of the country gentry are!" said Mr. Belford. "I have owned much real pleasure in conversing with them, in my various excursions. Their attachment to their employers, the morality of their lives, and that laudable spirit of independence which suggests the propriety of laying up their little store for that season when they cannot work, is highly praiseworthy."

Celia was eloquent in praise of such as she knew; while Lady Townly condemned and ridiculed their rustic awkwardness— "Ah! Celia, you have brought two specimens with you: I will have them up." And she rang the bell.

Celia blushed—she feared lest her sister should wound the feelings of her humble friends.

"Tell Miss Delacour's servants," said Lady Townly, to the man who waited her commands, "that I wish to see them before I go out; and order the carriage at one."

In

In a few minutes Patty and Richard appeared. Lady Townly commanded her features as she spoke to them, and with kind condescension recollected their services to herself, in a visit made four years since.

"What a fine young lady!" said Patty, as she gazed on the blooming Rachel.

Celia led her niece to the affectionate domestic. Richard was respectful, but lost in wonder at the furniture of the room, which to him appeared most extraordinary. Celia dismissed the disconcerted pair, grateful that her sister had shewn them such favour. The Baronet entered. "The carriage is at the door, Fanny," said he; "where do you mean to call this morning?"

"*Must* I enumerate?" said her Ladyship.

"While Celia is your companion, I should like to know," said he.

"Oh! aye, my aunt says something of this sort in her letter:—Well, I shall call on

on old Snowden, Cardonnel, and the Desmonds."

The Baronet smiled—"You will be amused at least," said he.

"I shall meet you," said Mr. Belford, "and give you a few *cues*. But in *this* your visit to London, my dear Madam, I will venture to assert you will never be *more* than *amused*. It is the age of *amusement*; and this *great* and proudly-gifted metropolis, which in itself comprises all that *luxury* could wish, or intellect desire, is, from its growing *immorality* and *sensual* refinements, falling into that odium of which I *once* thought it incapable."

"Belford is a reformer," said Lady Townly—"one of the *society* for the suppression of vice."

"That I disown," said he; "for the *root of all evil* is considered *above* the attacks of that phalanx; and if *I* were a member of a community of *that* sort, I would

would begin at the *head*—you should *all* tremble."

"We are beyond your power," said her Ladyship, laughing, as, followed by our heroine, she descended to the carriage.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

> "Though grey our heads, our thoughts and aims are green;
> Like damag'd clocks, whose hand and bell dissent,
> *Folly* sings *six*, while *Nature* points at *twelve*."

"WHAT crowded streets!" said Celia to her sister, as they passed through Oxford-street, down Bond-street, in their way to St. James's-square.

"*This* is Bond-street," said Lady Townly, "the emporium of fashion. You must get a necklace and bracelet, Celia." And she pulled the check and ordered the carriage to ———.

Our heroine declared herself satisfied with those she wore; they were a present from her aunt, and she was not partial to ornaments.

"Ridiculous!" said her Ladyship. The carriage

carriage stopped. "Any thing that's new in the jewellery way?" said this slave of fashion to the man who attended.

A drawer, containing numberless *ingenious* and some *ridiculous* appendages of modern taste, was presented. Celia regarded them with curiosity; but when, amongst their variety, she discovered an *enamel eye,* "What torture it must be to wear *this!*" said Celia.

"Torture!" said Lady Townly—"they are highly *becoming*. Let me see—bring me a *hazel eye.*"

The man obeyed; and, to the astonishment of our heroine, her Ladyship broached her gown with it. Celia smiled. She forbore any remark, while the jeweller remained; but her sister's persuasions were ineffectual to make her accept a similar bauble. "I will take this," said she, selecting one of trifling value.

"Are you *amused?*" said Mr. Belford, leaning in at the carriage.

"Very much," said Celia.

"Oh!

"Oh! she is excessively prejudiced at present," said Lady Townly: "we must conquer her provincial *economy*."

"It is not economy, but distaste," said Celia—"Can you think that elegant?" said she, directing Mr. Belford to the *hazel eye*.

"It is odious and ridiculous," said he. "My dear Lady Townly, you have a pair of very intelligent orbs already. Give this dim emblem to me, and I will leave it with his ———. I am going towards the Park, and he, you know, both *lends* an *eye* to Fashion, and *gets one* from her *hand*."

"Cruelly severe!" said her Ladyship. "I will wear it, if but to teaze Celia and you."

Mr. Belford waved his hand, and passed on; and in a few minutes they were announced and received at Lady Desmond's, in St. James's-square.

On being ushered into a spacious drawing-room, our heroine was infinitely surprised at the scene which presented itself. The hostess,

hostess, a handsome woman, somewhat advanced in life, was seated at a piano. Two grown girls, at a table, in one corner of the room, were making *shoes*. A handsome young woman was sitting to an artist. Celia hesitated. She thought *their* presence must be obtrusive. Lady Townly saw her confusion, and, smiling, motioned her to follow. Lady Desmond smiled over her shoulder, proceeded with a very rapid execution of a chromatic passage, then, jumping up in haste, ran to embrace her very "dear friend, Lady Townly."

"Miss Delacour," said Lady Desmond, raising her eye-glass to regard our heroine, "I am most excessively flattered," said she.

Celia wondered why; nor could she comprehend why her Ladyship used her glass to view her, when she could read her music without such aid. "It is the '*usage of society*,'" thought Celia. Yet, somewhat oppressed by its effect, she took a seat by her sister.

"How

"How enchanting!" said Lady Townly, looking round her; "*your* system is admirable—no idleness. I will only peep," she continued, rising, and taking a seat by the artist—"Beautiful! infinitely like! they are really *dangerous* to look upon."

The painter smiled with expressive meaning. Celia owned a curiosity to see the painting. Just as she had risen for the purpose, Mr. Belford was announced.—"All busy," said he, approaching the Lady of the house.

Lady Desmond laughed, and declared she was always satisfied with her plans, till the cynical Belford made his appearance.

"Why, surely, you never attend to what *he* says?" said Lady Townly.

"No, I do not absolutely mind him; but I hate to be laughed at."

"In the name of wonder," said Belford, looking over the shoulder of Celia, "what is this?"

The painter bowed.—"I have the honour to be *orb painter* to the nobility, Sir."

"This

"This is a new idea, I presume?" said Mr. Belford.

"Quite *nouvelle* in England, Sir," continued the painter. "The French are elegantly inventive. I am happy to assure you, that the idea pleases here. I have a great number of families, whom I must take in their turn. I last week went down to *Fanmore,* and took the *family eyes* of the ———."

"Very *lovely,* Celia!" said Lady Townly.

Celia smiled, and returned to her seat. The painter withdrew. Miss Desmond addressed Mr. Belford.—"I am afraid *you* will not encourge this refinement in the arts?" said she.

"Certainly not, Madam; it is perverting a science, in itself truly sublime, to the mere advantage of any caricaturist. What pleasure could an absent friend receive in a present of this sort? I suppose the painter, like *Miss Pentweazle* in the play, bids you to 'call up a look?"

"Oh no; he only begged mama to play one of her Italian scenas, because music always affects me so sensibly, that it gives expression to the eyes."

"Bravo!" said Mr. Belford—"So you, my dear Madam, are the painter's deputy on this most interesting occasion?"

"Well, you shall not convert me in this particular," said Lady Desmond. "I think every innocent *employment* is praiseworthy. '*Idleness* is the root of all evil.' You know *that* is a moral sentence, my dear Belford; so say no more."

"My sweet little *cobblers*," said Mr. Belford, approaching the young mechanics, "will you admit me to look on?"

The young ladies smiled, and Mr. Belford took a seat by them.

"Come, Miss Delacour," said he, "we will make room for you in our *stall*."

Celia obeyed the summons. The Miss Desmonds were surrounded by tools and shreds. Some very good specimens of their *trade* lay before them.

"I think

"I think *this* is a very laudable, a very *benevolent* devotion of time," said Celia.

"Even *Celia approves*," said Lady Townly, advancing.

Belford smiled—"Who are your *customers?*" said he; "for I could not venture to *recommend* you, till I know how many ladies of *rank* employ you."

"Oh! we make all our own *dress shoes,*" said Maria Desmond; "and aunt Halford has given up shoemakers entirely; we make for her and her six children, besides other friends."

"How *benevolent!*" said Mr. Belford.

Celia blushed—"I thought you made them for some person to sell," said she.

"Oh! no, my dear Madam," said Lady Desmond, "those are very impolitic schemes. The *familiarity* that ensues, when people in a certain rank bring their inferiors about them, in this way, is highly inconvenient; besides, that amongst that class of people to whom you allude, epidemic diseases are almost inseparable; and

the very *idea* of infection quite unhinges me."

Celia was silent—She had been in the habit of visiting the sick at Hadley; *she* had owned much happiness in conversing with her inferiors, seeking into their wants, and alleviating their distresses—had employed herself in *working* for the villagers, though not as a *mechanic.*

"You perceive," said Mr. Belford, addressing our heroine, "that *cobbling* is not so *benevolent* a trade as you imagined it to be."

"Believe me, Madam," said Lady Desmond, "if you suffer Mr. Belford to direct your taste, he will lead you into many errors. All the young ladies of my acquaintance condemn his fastidiousness, with appropriate discernment."

"Your caution comes too late, Madam," said our heroine, smiling, "for, *unfortunately*, I have formed a sort of league with this gentleman, from which I cannot withdraw myself, until I discover my error in admitting his tutelage."

"Then

"Then you have not done so *yet?*" said Lady Desmond, with affected surprise.

"Not yet," said Celia; "but our acquaintance is short. Perhaps I shall soon yield my opinion."

Mr. Belford professed his gratitude for her leniency; adding, however his vanity might be impeached by the avowal, he presumed to think that Lady Desmond would never class Miss Delacour amongst her *discerning* young friends.

"Tolerably vain, Belford," said Lady Townly.

"Did you ever know him other?" said Lady Desmond.

"Well, we must be gone," said Lady Townly. "I am going to old Snowdon, merely to quiz her."

"Very good:—don't spare," said the elegant hostess.

"Thank fortune, I am not a *shoemaker!*" said Mr. Belford, as he bade adieu to the young ladies, and attended Lady Townly and her sister to the carriage.

Lady Townly insisted upon his going with them, to which he cheerfully assented.

"Now tell me, Celia," said her Ladyship, "what do you think of the Desmonds?"

Celia hesitated.

"No cavilling—be ingenuous."

"I have been *amused*," said Celia, "but not pleased."

"Who could be?" rejoined her Ladyship.

"I thought you liked her Ladyship's *system?*" said Celia.

"Certainly, in her *presence*—why, I could not *tell* her that I thought her a fool."

"Nor need you have told a falsehood," said Celia.

Lady Townly blushed—"They are only fashionable fibs, Celia—what you must adopt, if you wish to keep up a circle of visiting."

"I cannot see the necessity of this," replied Celia. "The vanity of *such* people will *support* them in their fancies; they will even construe our *silence* into admiration; and this is, of all methods, the most easy—

saves

saves us from *argument*, yet leaves us at liberty to *think* for ourselves."

"That is the '*golden mean*,'" said Mr. Belford—"the most simple, yet the most *rare* lumination of reason."

Lady Townly attempted to prove the impossibility of observing such a line of conduct; but ere she had half digested her arguments, the carriage stopped at Lady Snowdon's.

"Now for autumnal Snowdon," said Belford, "who

————————carries in her face
Memento mori to each public place."

"You have deranged my purposed compliment," said Lady Townly. Yet, on entering the drawing-room of the bride-elect, her Ladyship devised one so extravagant as to astonish Celia.

The withering candidate for notoriety positively denied the report, though the various articles scattered over the room, the packages arranged for removal, &c. &c.

&c. &c. evinced that some affair of moment was in agitation.

"I shall expect favours," said Lady Townly—"nay, I must beg one for Miss Delacour: my sister is new to the town; nothing could happen more fortunate than a *distinction* of this sort, just at her *entré*—for *she* is in 'search of a husband."

Celia looked her displeasure, and secretly resolved to exact of her sister a conduct more refined, which, if refused, she would instantly return to Hadley.

"How is Miss Harley?" asked Mr. Belford.

"I have sent her into Wales," said Lady Snowdon, "in order to break off a silly attachment."

"You see," said Belford, turning to Celia, "that even in her follies, *this* woman presumes on her seniority:—if a silly thing is to be done, *she* stands forward as the actress."

Celia could not forbear the smile of assent; nor could she reprove a severity so justly excited.

"Poor

"Poor Cardonnel," said Lady Townly—"how does she wear the willow?"

While her Ladyship was parrying the *gaitié* of her fashionable friend, a hasty footstep was heard advancing; a lively whistle was warbled; and in the next moment an elegant-looking young man entered. "My dear Helen," said he, "will you look at the barouche?—Ah! *mon Dieu*, Lady Townly!—Belford, how are you?—I am very happy to see you, Madam," he continued, bowing to our heroine.

"Mr. Bridoon!" said Lady Snowdon, in a voice perfectly *audible* to the company—a voice which was meant to convey that *he* was *her* property; for his gaze, as he discovered Celia, who was, as Lady Townly said, *new* to society, alarmed the *Alpine* dame.

"Introduce me," said Bridoon, in a low voice, to Mr. Belford.

Mr. Belford complied. Celia was abashed by the intrusive manners of the youthful bridegroom.

"Is

"Is the barouche at the door?" said Lady Snowdon.

"You will see it, if you look through the window," said Bridoon, carelessly.

She arose; while Belford, with a smile, said, "So that is *your* Helen?"

"No quizzing," said the buck—"the pill is gilt."

Celia and Lady Townly advanced, to view the equipage; while Bridoon, with all the gallantry of the times, was making his inquiries concerning Celia.

"Poh!" said Belford, "it is too *late* to descend: you have established your *taste* for the *antique*; but, unlike the Trojan *Paris*, *your* Helen will spare you the *dangers* of a *foreign* war."

"By establishing a *domestic* feud," said Bridoon, laughing. "Well, I will forgive her," continued he; "I can *cut* with a good grace in that event."

Lady Townly was rapturous in her admiration of the barouche. Celia thought it handsome; but *she* was a stranger to the technical

technical terms used by her sister. "Well, I must call on Cardonnel," added her Ladyship. "What shall I say for you?" addressing Bridoon.

"Oh, I saw her ten minutes since—Handsome as ever."

Lady Snowdon bit her lips, and darting an angry look at her lover, the mischievous Lady Townly and her companions took leave—"Home," said her Ladyship, as she entered the carriage. "We shall be too late for Cardonnel; and I recollect she half promised to dine with us. Join us, Belford," added she, kissing her hand; "we will *row* her unmercifully."

Mr. Belford assented, declaring that our heroine's *safety*, and not her Ladyship's *purpose*, demanded his presence.

CHAP. V.

"Birth, education, and abundance, are great blessings; but abused by pleasure into motives and instruments of indulgence, birth is more ignoble than obscurity, knowledge is more pernicious than ignorance, and *abundance* more a *misfortune* than *want*.

Our heroine, though anxious to avow her disapprobation of Lady Townly's levity, with regard to herself, was delicate as to introducing the subject—"Yet is not this false shame?" said she mentally; "has not Fanny, in the space of a few hours, called the blushes to my cheeks, and *really* wounded my feelings?—I will talk with her to-morrow."

As Patty assisted the toilet of Miss Delacour, she availed herself of the opportunity to express her surprise at all she had seen.

"It's

"It's a noble house, to be sure," said Patty, "but not so *comfortable* as Hadley; and as to the drawing-room, Miss Celia, I declare to you, I counted *fifteen* tables, of *different* sizes, and all *odd tea-cups*, put upon the chimney-shelf, and comical *jars*, and *bottles*, and *paper boxes*; and as to the black figures that stand in the corners, they tell *me* they are to hold wax-lights; but, for my part, I think they are best in the *dark*, for they are only *half* dressed—quite undecent things, to my mind. Mrs. Minet, my Lady's woman, says they are beautiful, because they are *classuc*; but, says I, I don't know what you mean by that—only, in plain English, they are not modest."

Celia smiled at the critique of her humble friend, in whose sentiments she partly coincided; recommending her, however, to avoid altercation with her sister's servants, and to continue to act according to her *usual* way of life, she dismissed the faithful Patty, and descended to the drawing-room.

Rachel,

Rachel, *dressed* for company, was seated on a sofa. Our heroine approached the little prattler, and began questioning her as to what she learned. The sprightly emblem of *modern* information fled to a *book-table*, and presently returned with about a dozen small volumes—"I can *say* all these," said Rachel.

Celia was referring to their pages, when Sir Harry and Mr. Belford entered.

"Seeking *amusement* yet!" said Mr. Belford.

Celia smiled—"Are these the *first* rudiments of a *London* education?" asked Celia.

"Decidedly," said Mr. Belford; "and I have heard a lisping little innocent run through half a dozen of those, with a *correctness* that has assured me, that if their *talents* had been directed to the attainment of the *commandments*, or a hymn of the sublime Addison, they would have been *equally* successful."

"What a pity!" said Celia. "Yet some

of

of these have much merit, though *they* are certainly beyond the comprehension of a child."

"Ah! Celia," said Lady Townly, "you are *reviewing* Rachel's library. Is it not infinitely entertaining?"

"I wish it was instructive," said our heroine.

"You are the very patroness for a Sunday school," said her Ladyship. "What could you possibly put into the hands of a child of five years of age?"

"I am not an advocate for book-learning at that age," said Celia; "but I think it is possible to rouse a laudable *love* of learning *even* at five years of age."

"How would you begin this wonderful system?" said Lady Townly.

"Tell me, Celia," said Sir Harry, addressing our heroine, "what would you recommend?"

"Why, my aunt, whose plans appear to me of the best sort, because the most simple, is of opinion, that children are, in infancy, best

best instructed by conversations adapted to their capacities. She considers them naturally prone to inquiry. Thus, she says, it is unwise to illustrate *too* much to them. Give them the simple idea, in as correct a way as possible; but teach them to *expect* from *books* the highest and most lasting information. I saw an instance of her plan proving highly efficacious, where the child of a clergyman, left destitute, became the happy object of *her* care.

"Lucy Goodwin was four years old when brought to Hadley. My aunt began by teaching her to view the beauties of nature. When Lucy admired a flower, and asked its name, my aunt explained that it was a *daisy* perhaps; that it grew in the spring, &c. The child asked if she could get daisies *every* day? The answer was simple—'No; God gives particular flowers to each season.' 'What are seasons?' asked Lucy. 'Seasons divide the year,' said my aunt.—Thus grew out of each simple question some new source of wonder

wonder to the opening mind of the little orphan; and in the course of one year she had imbibed a hoard of the most useful knowledge; so that, in the next spring, she anticipated *all* that was to come:—and from the *works* of nature, her thoughts naturally aspired to understand the *source* from which they flowed. Religion became her delight. In short, so imperceptibly had my aunt improved the understanding of her *protegé*, that at eleven years of age, she was the most enlightened and happy child I ever beheld."

"And all this was effected without an attempt to *amuse* the child?" said Mr. Belford.

"Undoubtedly," said Celia. "I have known my aunt leave her little charge purposely in a room alone, for an hour. On her return, her question was, 'How have you *employed* yourself, Lucy?' The child had been reading or working perhaps, and would express the same. 'Very proper,' said

said my aunt; 'you are advancing towards *reason*, Lucy, and have discovered that it is unbecoming in a *rational* being to waste time."

"My dear Celia," said Lady Townly, "even admitting that the system is purely moral and wise, and that *I* was to adopt it in my own family, I should be rearing a creature at whom the *world* would laugh. She must either die in 'single blessedness,' or become the wife of a village preacher, where her *piety* may be called into *practice*."

"Is piety *wholly* rejected in London?" asked Celia.

"No, my dear sober girl," said her Ladyship; "but really, Celia, such qualities, however valuable in themselves, are not estimated in a certain circle; and if, after a term of years, to which *I* look with horror," (shrugging her shoulders) "if I should at last present such a character as you describe, what a disappointment to the expecting town!—No, positively, Rachel shall

shall be a point of attraction. Consider, *I* am to *revive* into notice *again*, on her *introduction*."

"Fanny, Fanny," said the Baronet, "no more of this, I beseech you."

Mr. Belford saw the uneasiness of his friend, and by a reference to those days of their first acquaintance, drew him to smile at many a happy recollection.

Lady Cardonnel was announced—"How are you, my dear Townly?" said her Ladyship.—"Ah! Miss Delacour, how have the beaux behaved?—have you seen *one* whom you could select?"

"The *ladies* have been the objects of my surprise this morning," said Celia; "and in regard to the gentlemen, my *sister* has *recanted* her assertion of last night, perceiving that it was objectionable to me in every point of view."

"Well, we shall see," said Lady Townly, "if, after a few months, you retain this opinion. In fact, if you quit London without *distinguishing* a slave, we shall give you

credit for an immense portion of *prudence*, or a very *cold* heart."

"I will be content under either conclusion," replied Celia: "I should feel *honoured* in the *first*; and in the latter, *time* will either *establish* your remark, or convince you of your error."

Mr. Belford regarded our heroine with an eye that seemed to look to the *future* with *fear*; yet few men had more *right* to look *forward* with *hope*. Perhaps our readers will define the *cause* and nature of his feelings.

As Celia took her seat at the dinner-table, she owned a considerable portion of surprise—not the vulgar surprise of a person unused to the elegancies of life—but between the tables of Sir Harry Townly and Mrs. Mansfield, there was a *distinct* difference; it was as *luxury* compared to *moderation*—nay, Celia thought it *gross*. She wondered, but it was *silently*, how females, who called themselves *delicate*, could eat of a dozen dishes, applauding *each* with all the *goût* of epicurism;

epicurism; and as she played with her knife and fork, in order not to appear observing, the words of her favourite Milton occurred.

"If every just man, that now pines with want,
Had but a moderate and becoming share
Of that which lewdly pamper'd Luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature's full blessings would be well dispens'd,
In unsuperfluous even proportion,
And she no bit encumber'd with her store."

Nor did her wonder cease here. "The wines—the liquors—how strange!" thought Celia.—"Are there such characters as female '*bon vivants?*' Oh! no," said the tenacious Celia, as her heart pleaded for the fashionable Fanny, "it is only the '*usage of society.*" Yet that she approved such a system, we would not pretend to assert.

The ladies ascended to the drawing-room. "My dear Car," said Lady Townly, as she stood before the chimney-glass, and arranged her *gorgon* ringlets, "what

do you *mean* to *say* about Bridoon's nuptials?"

"Why as they do by elections—most *votes,* viz. *gold,* carries the day. And you are content with this *parfaitément,*" said Lady Cardonnel. "I know *how* the creature would have decided, if *poverty* had not stared him in the face.—Don't you think Mr. Bridoon excessively handsome?" continued her Ladyship, addressing Celia.

"I did not remark him sufficiently to answer you."

"Poor Bridoon," said Lady Townly, "how mortified he would feel! As to Snowdon, she is already as jealous as age and ugliness can make her; and I *really* took infinite pleasure in adding to her derangement. *He* has studied his part with deep attention, I perceive: he will gain the entire possession of her property."

"And he will *spend* it with *eclat,*" said Lady Cardonnel—"Few men possess better taste. I have known him discard an equipage, on the *instant* that he discovered the

the *construction* was not original. It was he who *invented* the rumble-tumble, and that ingenious *whip* with the *quizzing-glass* in the hook.—He was born to be conspicuous."

"I think his present resolution is admirably calculated to *support* his *character in this* particular," said Celia, smiling.

"What a piquant little satirist!" said Lady Townly.—"Celia, you will do in time."

The arrival of the gentlemen gave a turn to the conversation. Sir Harry requested Celia to touch the piano. She complied; but though the gentlemen *applauded*, the ladies were silent.

"Celia plays *correct*," said Lady Townly, after a pause. "She has good *execution*, but no manner. My dear girl, when you play 'God save the King,' 'Rule Britannia,' &c. &c. we expect plain English cadences; they are applicable; but in the divine *Italian* airs, in the rapid *chromatics* of a Dussek, we expect the *interesting* move-

ment of the *form*, the *sweeping grace*, if I may express myself thus, that inclines the body at *one* moment to the keys, and in the *next*, with an appropriate look and gesture, asks the suffrage, if not the *applause*, of the admiring group. All this may be acquired by *study*. I will send to ——— to-morrow."

"Not for *me*," said Celia. "I only play to please a very lenient judge, who, like myself, would think the *resource* of little value, if it engaged *too* much of my time; besides, that *all exhibitions* are incompatible with my ideas of delicacy."

Celia resigned her seat to Lady Cardonnel, who, by a perfect display of *modern acting* in this science, would have deterred our heroine from encreasing her musical knowledge, had she not *previously* avowed her sentiments.

Her Ladyship followed by an *Italian* air, in which equal feeling was illustrated.—What would a woman of *fashion*, a woman of *science*, who has glees *written* for her, and

and *lends* her house for a concert—what would *such* a woman feel, if she could hear her *taste* termed *erroneous*, and her *style indelicate?* Why, she would say, what *we* are forced to coincide in, "That it is only the *creatures* who live *out* of the *world* who could arraign a system so generally *adopted*, and consequently approved."

"There are *two* sides of an *argument*," says the child of *Nature*. "By *whom* is *this* style approved?" Truth stands forward to confess, that it is the "voluptuous of *one* sex, and the votaries in the train of notoriety in the *other*, who make up the *fashionable world*."—"Question! question!" says Reason. *Nature*, from her known *antiquity*, (a most imperious claim in the present day), asserts her right.—"Am I ever sweeter," says the guileless maid, "than when the village swain 'tunes his oaten reed?' or more *harmonious* than when, in heavenly strain, I 'swell the note of praise?' or more *innocent* than as I precede the bride to church, and alternately

dance

dance in her path, and play the merry air?" —"Never, never!" says the whole family of Innocence;—and as we *hope* they are the more *numerous* family, the *majority* is in favour of *Nature*, against *Art* and *Italian* refinement.

Lady Townly was rapturous in her praise of her fashionable friend, advising our heroine to endeavour at attaining style, without which music was quite a *bore*.

Celia was silent. The allusion did not offend, for *she* was not an exhibitionist.

While yet her Ladyship was displaying her judgment in the science, Mr. Danbury and Lady Bab Blindon were announced.— "How kind!" said Lady Townly, advancing to her visitors.

"Nay, believe me, Townly, you owe me nothing; it is quite a call *en passant*. We are going to the Opera; but Danbury insisted upon looking in, for a few minutes, as we saw you were at home."

"Introduce me," said Mr. Danbury, in a low voice to Sir Harry, and glancing at Celia.

"The

"The secret's out," said Lady Townly, laughing immoderately—"Miss Delacour is the magnet of attraction this evening." And she proceeded to the forms usual on these *interesting* occasions.

Celia blushed most unfashionably. That prominent situation in which her sister always placed her, appeared to her unfeeling. Her resolution was instantly taken—"To-morrow morning," said she, mentally, "I will make Fanny comprehend my sentiments in these points. If she persists in such folly, I will retire to Hadley directly."

Mr. Danbury was elegantly gallant and complimentary. Mr. Belford watched its effect on the genuine character of our heroine, with an attentive curiosity, which Celia almost inclined to think unkind. He saw her distress; yet he made no effort to relieve her from it.

"Is it true you have withdrawn your name from the *club?*" said Sir Harry to Mr. Danbury.

"No;

"No; we have arranged the difference," said he.

"What was the point in question?" asked Mr. Belford.

"Why, *three* of us were staunch as to having the drab coat to *meet* the boots. They *kicked* at first; but we soon *trained* them into the right *track*. 'Ocular demonstration,' says I—'look about you, is it not the *costume* of *Cochee?*' They were convinced, after a little *plunging*; and *now*, nothing can be more *natty* than the whole system is."

"You are right," said Mr. Belford. "There is a species of wisdom in your making the plan so complete at once."

Danbury stared. He knew Belford to be a man who satirised modern assumptions.

"I am serious," continued Mr. Belford —"its *perfection* will make its *satiety;* and we shall see you in search of some other gewgaw, to astonish the *vulgar*, and make the *moral think*."

"What

"What a gloomy satirist Belford is!" said Danbury.

"He's a perfect *anodyne* to mirth," said Lady Bab.

"To *your* sort of mirth, I am an avowed enemy," replied Belford.

"I will hear no more," said her Ladyship, rising—"Adieu!" And, led by her brother, she retired.

"I wish you joy, Celia," said Lady Townly; "in one day to have seen two of the most dashing men in town, evidently captivated by your *natural* charms, is really something."

"What terms your sex adopt on these occasions!" said the Baronet, smiling—"and in the present case they are lost, for your sister is not desirous of false adulation; nor could she be flattered that such egregious blockheads were in her train."

"My dear Townly," said Lady Cardonnel, "you are actually getting quite morose. Happily for those whom you descry, your *home-made feelings* are very well known, and

and you are certainly losing ground with *many* whom I could name. But there is something immensely cruel in speaking thus of one's *fellow-creatures,* besides the very great *disadvantage* it may prove to Miss Delacour. She will regard all the men as monsters, if she sees them through the medium of your cynical colouring."

"I am most happy in having so good a judge of the world as Townly to elucidate characters for me," said Celia—"not that I should fear my own judgment, for as *yet* it does not appear to me that much discernment is requisite to know the *world* for what it *is.*"

"It is only the *intoxicated* children of *folly* who shun the sober path of reason," said Belford, "who, like the votary of Bacchus, sips the insidious poison, in order to drown *reflection,* that can be deceived by the garish cheat."

"Harry," said Lady Townly, "you made a very nice *distinction* just now:—You believe that Celia *expects* to be adored, though

though she would shrink from *false adulation.*"

"Fanny," said our heroine, "you certainly entertain an erroneous opinion of my disposition, if you think this sort of *badinage* pleases me. I believe that you are thus volatile, in order to do away the *timidité* of my retired education. Let me ask of you to desist. I do not blush to avow, that no sallies of wit, however happy, shall draw me from the simple path which suits my inclination. Forgive me, if I am too plain," continued Celia, taking the hand of her sister: "less candour would disparage the affection I bear you."

"*Ma chere* little moralist," said Lady Cardonnel, "all this is very pretty; but as Sir Harry, who must be supposed to understand your character better than most persons, has *admitted* that you *hope* to be *adored,* it is not necessary *you* should extenuate."

"Nor yet that *any* one 'should set down aught in malice," said Mr. Belford; "and whatever

whatever the native delicacy of Miss Delacour may induce her to disclaim, *I* can very readily believe that she was born to be *adored*."

"*This* from Belford!" said Lady Townly and her friend in a breath.

"Yes, from Belford, who, while he avows himself a true admirer of youth and beauty, is *outre* enough to assert, that an ingenuous *mind* is a charm superior to either."

Celia, smiling, declared, "That she was too new to the *stage* to bear *unqualified* praise—I know not if I ought not to term it *liberal encouragement* for a novice," continued she. At least allow me to *retire*, for I own myself oppressed by the leniency of my audience." And, with a smile of sweetest expression, she withdrew.

The gentlemen were profuse in encomiums. Lady Townly thought her sister a very *perfect* woman; but that she would be more agreeable, when *some* of her prejudices were done away.

"I think her a fine girl," said Lady Cardonnel;

Cardonnel; "but, my dear friend, though a thousand Belfords should say the contrary, believe me, *she* will never please in a *certain* rank. *You*, with all your matron graces, would ever claim distinction, where *she* would scarcely be seen."

Sir Harry looked his displeasure; while Mr. Belford, with marked irony, illustrated the various modes by which the *married* women of the *present* day became conspicuous —if no worse.

Lady Cardonnel took leave. The fashionable Fanny retiring soon after, the Baronet and his friend enjoyed a social hour of unreserved friendship. Celia was their theme. Each spoke, and each applauded. Sir Harry's was the praise of a man who knew her worth, and took delight in expatiating on her character: Mr. Belford's was that of an interested observer, who had given her full credit for *virtues* of the most engaging sort: but, like all aspiring minds, he did not disdain to be *further* informed; on the contrary, he was peculiarly anxious to elicit the

the most trivial trait of her disposition; and as he bade Sir Harry good-night, he, with a serious sort of smile, observed it was many years since *he* had sat up an hour after midnight, to *talk* of an individual woman.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

> "A soul without reflection, like a pile
> Without inhabitant, to ruin runs."

As Celia, with her niece, attended the toilet of Lady Townly next morning, her determined purpose weighed on her spirits —"To reject it," said Celia, "will appear as though I was weak, indeed."

Waiting the departure of Minet, she was summoning courage to revert to the ostensible *motive* of her present visit, when, just as the period arrived, for Minet had withdrawn, Rachel, with a miniature case in her hand, begged her aunt to open it, that she might kiss her dear brother.

This, to the affectionate Celia, was a fortuitous circumstance; she readily complied, and gazing on the blooming portrait of the smiling angel, an involuntary

tear fell on the crystal --" Is this a good likeness ?" asked Celia.

" Very fine," said her Ladyship.

Our heroine, with gentlest accent, enquired as to the cause and manner of his death.

" It was a fever, Celia ; but I did not see him after the third day."

Celia looked her surprise.

" Townly staid with him, and Rachel and I were removed into the country."

" Was it so infectious ?" asked Celia.

" I feared it was," said Lady Townly ; " but I have a great dread of fevers."

" Indeed !" said Celia, thoughtfully. " My dear Fanny," continued our heroine, " while the subject is before us, I am most anxious to prove to you, that I bear the fondest affection toward, and take the liveliest interest in your feelings ; it was *this* induced my aunt to spare me, at Townly's solicitations. I thought you were in grief, and I hastened to share your feelings—forgive me when I add, that I am dis-

disappointed—that you mistake my character. Those lively sallies, which you exert yourself to adopt for my amusement, are in fact painful to me. Admit me to your confidence, as far as you feel consistent; make me subservient to your comfort, by any of those concessions which, as a sister, you have a right to demand. I will devote my time to you, if your health, or *domestic* arrangements, require my services; but, as my visit was purely that of a wish to lessen your anguish as a mother, I feel myself at liberty to reject all engagements that are incompatible with my habits or opinions. Yet think me not so arrogant, as to sit down contented, at my time of life, without endeavouring to acquire a little worldly knowledge—it is my intention to do so; but then I must sip from the *least* intoxicating source."

"Celia," said Lady Townly, "I envy you that equanimity of character that you

possess; my spirits are sudden, and often hurry me into errors, which I blush to acknowledge afterwards. In the instance of our dear little Henry, I was no sooner settled at the cottage, than I wished myself back again. I wrote Townly, and begged him to tell me if I might return with safety—he did not write for two days, and on the third, my presence would have been of no avail. Tell me, Celia, was not this very remiss?"

Celia was silent.

"Speak candidly — what would aunt Martha say to it?"

"God forbid she knew it!" said Celia. "That is," continued our heroine, who blushed at the strong censure her words conveyed, "my aunt is so indifferent to all *personal* inconvenience, even for *strangers*, that I have known her sit by a sick-bed, where the most alarming symptoms have prevailed; and I am sure she could not have any idea of the nature of those feelings,

feelings, which could draw a line between *self*, and those who by *nature* and affection have a right to our care."

Lady Townly seemed oppressed, even to suffocation. Celia was alarmed; she endeavoured to rouse her, and was successful in producing a passionate shower of tears.

"I cannot reflect, my sister," said Lady Townly; "a thousand reproaches cling to my heart, when I think of my dear boy."

However our heroine might have been alarmed at the hysterical affection of her sister, or fearful that her remarks had been too severe, she hailed this semblance of feeling, and, with most persuasive eloquence, illustrated the necessity of an immediate humiliation before Him "who seeth all hearts," and turneth not from the contrite.

Lady Townly was at this moment the victim of *false shame*; she had not *blushed*, while acting contrary to her character as a

mother, yet she could not, before her sister, fall prostrate and open her heart, with the simplicity and candour which her errors demanded.

Celia saw the struggle, and though she secretly condemned the weakness of her principles, she considered the *present* as a moment of some interest—" I will leave you, Fanny," said the well-judging sister, taking Rachel in her hand; " you will join us at the breakfast-table."

Celia was full of hope, nor did the vision flee her bosom, as, in half an hour afterward, Lady Townly entered the drawing-room, with a placid, yet not sorrowful countenance.

The Baronet regarded his wife with a tender solicitude—" Fanny," said he, " I never saw a likeness between Celia and you till this morning."

" Indeed !" said her Ladyship ; and smiling through tears, that spoke more of *sentiment* than *weakness*, she admitted, " that if congeniality of opinion could effect such

such semblance, it was probable they might look so that morning, as they had been much interested in a recent conference."

Sir Harry, by a comprehensive glance at Celia, gathered the *nature* of their conference. All that gentleness, which ever distinguishes a manly bosom, was accorded to the awakened Fanny.

Celia began to think that her visit to London would own all the advantages that the affectionate husband had anticipated. But she was doomed in part to rescind the pleasing hope; for ere the *morning* was over in Portman-square, a train of fashionable calls had nearly deranged the favourable impression. The Baronet, vexed at the intrusion, retired. Celia would gladly have done the same, but it would be leaving her sister to the *enemy*.

"When shall we see you in public?" said Mrs. Vermont, a handsome-looking young woman, dressed in the most expensive style.

"The

"The *time* is out," said Lady Townly; "I shall be at Cardonnel's party to-morrow evening."

"I am excessively glad," said Lady Frost; "you have really made a most excessive sacrifice to etiquette!"

Lady Townly looked towards our heroine, as if she feared *she* would discover the allusion.

"Come, Rachel," said Mrs. Vermont, "let me hear '*Mother Hubbard*,' before I go."

Rachel complied, and received *due* applause for her recitation.

"What an astonishing *memory* the little fairy has!" said Lady Frost to Celia.

Celia replied in the affirmative.

"My sister does not approve of this sort of poetry for children," said Lady Townly.

"Why, they are in high fashion," said Lady Frost.

Celia smiled, as though *that* in itself was sufficient to make them valueless with her.

"You will find that they are universally admired," said Mrs. Vermont; "in fact, they are introduced at the *best* tables with the dessert, as a *bonne bouche*."

"It is there they may meet their *appropriate* praise, and prove harmless; their aim is *amusement*, and they certainly own that power," said Celia; "and it is this quality which makes them dangerous in the hands of children."

"All work, and no *play*," said Lady Frost. "Ah, my dear Madam, those were the days of our grandmothers. A great deal has been done for the rising generation; even in my *own* family, I am sometimes obliged to yield to the book-knowledge of my daughters."

Mr. Belford was announced.

"Not a word, my dear Frost," said Mrs. Vermont; "Mr. Belford will quiz you unmercifully."

"What a salutation!" said Mr. Belford. "Let me avow, before this little *coterie*, what has caused my disgrace here," bowing

to

to Mrs. Vermont. "I happened to say, that beauty

"Is, when unadorned, adorned the most,"

and she declared that I was satirizing her lace drapery. I was at a loss," continued Mr. Belford, "to decide, which was most conspicuous, my *satire* or her *vanity*."

"What an intolerably provoking creature you are!" said Mrs. Vermont.

Lady Frost laughed heartily at her friend, and declared Mr. Belford had the best of the argument—"We were speaking of education," continued her Ladyship; "do not you consider the *present* a very enlightened era?"

"Brilliant in the extreme," said Mr. Belford; "we are all *dazzled* now."

"Do, be serious for a moment," said Lady Frost. "Has not a great deal been done for the children of this age?"

"*Too* much, Madam; seriously, a *great* deal too much. They have not *time* to *reflect* on *one* volume, ere another is put into

into their hands. They can trace the celestial world with *some* appearance of science, yet are in general unacquainted with the great *Organizer* of the system. They are accurate in *dates* and *events*, because a *tablet* for the *memory* is often preferred to a *slow* and *progressive* study of facts. The *Roman* and *Grecian* histories are *treasured* in the minds of girls of twelve and thirteen years of age, while the *Bible* is withheld from them, because some of its books are *obscure*, or, according to the opinions of a *few*, not *fit* for *children* to peruse. I am at a loss to understand how they draw the line in this particular," continued Mr. Belford, " where the meanest capacity might so easily decide. But in fact, it is the *classical scholar*, and not the *informed Christian*, whom we are solicitous to rear, in this age of refinement; and when we *begin* by *picture* learning, as in this case," said Belford, taking up one of Rachel's books, " we lay the ground-

ground-work of a superficial education; the child remembers the *subject* from the *picture*: the *memory* is exercised, I grant; but this is a poor offering from a *rational* being, who, even in its *infancy*, may be taught to *reflect*."

"Well, you cannot convert *me*," said Lady Frost.

Mr. Belford smiled — "It is not possible that a *fashionable* mother can be displeased with the *present* mode of education," continued he; "it does not break in upon their amusements; they purchase all the *books* that are written for the advancement of youth; the young ladies have very copious libraries; the pride of the parent is *gratified*, by the *variety* of *knowledge* which her daughters acquire; and they are, at the ages of fifteen or sixteen, quite competent to the *arrangement* of the literary tables of their mama. They are *brought out* finished; the *richest* man is fixed upon as the husband, and sometimes

times with success—they marry, and two or three years after they are *brought out*, they *go off*."

"How illiberal!" said Mrs. Vermont. "You do wise to continue single, Belford; you adhere to the adage, 'bachelors' children' are wonderfully managed in idea."

Lady Frost, turning to our heroine, "begged her to be circumspect in admitting Mr. Belford's colouring to have too much weight with her—he is a *disappointed* man, my dear Madam," looking archly at the judicious satirist. "We shall see you at Cardonnel's to-morrow, I hope. Adieu!" and, followed by Mrs. Vermont, she departed.

"You have actually set them off," said Lady Townly, laughing.

"Then I have done you a service," said Mr. Belford; "they are two of the many pests who annoy all whom they visit, and leave no impression, save the *preponderance* of their follies."

"Really I think Frost a very harmless creature," said Lady Townly.

"Divest

"Divest her of her *plans,*" said Belford, "and she would be what you say."

"Nay now you are censorious — her girls are not *out* yet."

"What of that? has she not inveigled young Ernmore, who is a ward of her Lord's, into an engagement, from which the blockhead has not the effrontery to disengage himself?—I understand her, Miss Frost will not make her *debut* till she is Lady Ernmore."

"Positively I did not understand this," said her Ladyship; "it is an admirable manœuvre; and I am vexed at it, as I wished to introduce him to Celia; he has an immense fortune."

"I want no introductions of the sort," said Celia, with warmth. "I thought I had told you, Fanny, that such remarks are very objectionable to me."

"Poh, child! you must be established. Ernmore is only twenty, to be sure, and you are three-and-twenty, Celia."

Mr.

Mr. Belford fixed his eyes on our heroine with a look of enquiry, and smiling, asked "if she suffered such an *important* fact to be divulged?"

"It would be extraordinary if my sister did not know my age," said Celia.

"Yet I doubt if she remembers her own," said Mr. Belford.

"You are curious, I perceive," said her Ladyship. "Don't betray me, Celia; I am resolved to keep the matter a secret.—I look horridly to-day," she continued, walking to the glass. "Get your veil, Celia; we will take a turn in the square."

Mr. Belford attended them.—As they walked in this fashionable promenade, Lady Townly met a few of her acquaintance.

"A delicious morning—you look charmingly—were you at the rooms last night? —oh no, I forgot—well, we shall soon be enlivened by your smiles—you had no loss, I can assure you; the operatic part was

was execrable — the supper excellent — adieu, adieu!"

"Did you remark how Hayford named the supper?" said Lady Townly; "she never takes a *dinner* on the days she goes to the rooms—is not she an admirable economist?"

"Hush, Fanny," said our heroine, "she will hear you."

"She knows we understand her," said Lady Townly. "My dear girl, if Hayford did not turn a deaf ear upon certain occasions, she could not shew her face in society."

"What a callous creature a woman of fashion must be," said Celia, "if you are not indulging yourself at the expence of those of whom you speak!"

"They are miserable truths," said Mr. Belford.

At this moment Rachel emerged from one of the shrubberies with her maid.

"What a Hebe!" said Lady Townly, catching the child in her arms.

"Does

"Does she *know* what is meant by the term?" asked Celia.

"Not yet, I trust," said Mr. Belford; "but it is highly absurd."

"Naughty Belford, and aunt Celia, wont let mama call her pet a beauty," said Lady Townly to her daughter.

"Are you a good girl?" said Celia; "shall I ask nurse if you have behaved well during your walk?"

"No," said the child, with infinite *naiveté*, "for Martin says I have been very troublesome."

"What has Miss Townly done to offend you?" said Lady Townly, turning indignantly to the servant.

"She would walk on the wet grass, my Lady, though I told her not."

"My child will take cold!" said her Ladyship in a fright. "Take off her shoes this moment."

Martin was proceeding to take Rachel from the arms of her mother, but Lady

Townly opposed it with disdain—she would carry the child herself.

Celia blushed for the mistaken resentment of her sister.

Mr. Belford smiled internally, but made no offer of services to the offended mother, who hastened to quit the garden.

"How *interesting!*" said two or three of her Ladyship's very dear friends, as they met her thus matronly employed.

"What a *carriage* she has!" said two morning loungers, as they raised their quizzing-glasses to admire her figure.

Whether the anger of Lady Townly, or that *grateful meed,* which the *world* so well knows *how* and *when* to administer, aided this unusual exertion, we know not; certain it is, her Ladyship never rested till she gave her sweet burthen into the arms of Sir Harry, who had just descended the steps, and was going to mount his horse.

"What has happened?" said the Baronet, in alarm.

"My

"My child has caught her death!" said the incautious Fanny.

"Oh say not so," said the agitated father.

Mr. Belford calmed the feelings of his friend, by declaring there was no cause for anxiety, except that which Lady Townly might experience from her exertion—"and *that* she deserves," continued Belford, as he closed the drawing-room door.

Lady Townly looked towards Mr. Belford with anger.

"I do not mind your scorn," said he; "you have acted with too much haste, *wholly* without reflection—are the child's stockings wet?"

"Not in the least," said Sir Harry, who had been anxiously regarding the little prattler, to discover the nature of the accident.

"Thank God!" said Lady Townly. "Belford, I forgive you," and she extended her hand to her real friend.

Mr. Belford took a seat beside her Ladyship—"What apology will you offer to your servant, who acted from principle, and has been so ill requited by you?"

"I will buy her a new gown," said Lady Townly, laughing.

"To what degradations does the want of reflection lead us!" resumed Mr. Belford; "how weak we must appear in the eyes of those to whom we make these concessions! Let me advise you not to qualify this matter by a present, but send for the girl, and tell her that you find there was no real occasion for your fears."

"Impossible!" said Lady Townly.

"Your child's safety demands it," said Mr. Belford; "you have destroyed her self-confidence, and in a manner damped her zeal; even Rachel will not attend to her instructions — not to mention the wound you have given to her feelings."

"What ought I to do, Celia?" said her Ladyship.

"I am

"I am of Mr. Belford's opinion," said our heroine, "if on no other principle than to restore poor Martin's peace; and, in regard to Rachel, it is highly proper she should be taught to observe a general sort of humility to all those who have charge over her."

Lady Townly rang the bell, and ordered Martin to be sent to her. The poor girl appeared, but so pale and agitated, as to claim the sympathy of Celia. Lady Townly laughed at her "sorrowful face," as she called it, and hurried over her acknowledged error, with all the vivacity of her character.

So powerfully had her Ladyship's thoughtlessness affected the spirits of Sir Harry, that he could not recover the shock. His heart was tender, and his recent loss yet fresh in his memory; his purposed ride was given up, and he departed with Mr. Belford to take a walk.

Celia was the victim of regrets; she

saw with anguish, that Lady Townly's assertion was correct; she could not reflect, and she trembled for the happiness of such a woman.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

"The world is still deceived with ornament."

It was in the evening of the day of which we have been speaking, that our heroine discovered, from the conversation of her sister, that she had not been to any party since the death of her child.

Celia expressed her surprise, that *etiquette* should influence people, in a case in which feeling alone should dictate.

Lady Townly contended for the *usage of society*, observing, that she always attended to the express terms of mourning, in particular, as it was a dress so very unbecoming.

Celia not only rejected her opinions as false, but deprecated them as unfeeling—"No outward garb can add to, or diminish the *real* feeling of any creature," said Celia; "but there is a decency in the obser-

observance, which I consider as *consoling* to an affectionate heart; and, as it owns a sombre appearance, it would have the effect on the world, of impressing them with the belief, that we were not disposed to mix in its circles, and, as such, spare us from unmeaning intrusion, or importunities."

"Even if one *thought* as you do, Celia, it would not be possible to be so rigid; it hurts trade, and is, besides, very expensive, for one's wardrobe gets quite antique in a couple of months—I declare I am at a loss for a dress to-morrow evening—that reminds me, Celia—what do you wear at Cardonnel's to-morrow?"

"I shall find a dress that shall do," said Celia, smiling.

"But, my dear girl, you must submit to be directed; Patty has no taste—Minet shall assist you—and remember, my love, that the *costume* of an *evening* party is very distinct from a *morning* dress—in fact, you must *undress* to go into public."

"I am not *practically* informed in this *essential*

essential point," said Celia, smiling, "but I have made some observations on a few whom I have seen—Lady Cardonnel, and Lady Blindon, have given me an idea on the subject; but worlds should not tempt me to adopt the style of either—No, Fanny, if I accompany you, it is partly in compliance with your wishes, and, in a degree, to satisfy my own curiosity. But you know I am independent in some particulars, and this is one. There is much ingenuity, and some taste, displayed in the present fashion, but *delicacy* seems out of question—to such innovations I never will yield; and, though I should see myself ridiculed, and pointed at as a country Miss, I will bear with it, rather than sacrifice my feelings to *false taste,* and a *style* at which my *rustic delicacy* is somewhat offended."

Lady Townly endeavoured, by a lively strain of ridicule, to draw her sister from her prejudices, but in vain—"Then you are resolved on going into public muffled up, as if in armour?"

"Not

"Not in a *whalebone* case," said Celia, laughing; "really I must condemn that fashion, Fanny; nothing can be more ungraceful than the present shapes—there is not a semblance of *ease* in any of the women I have seen."

"Why, I confess, there is a formality in the figure just now," said Lady Townly; "the Grecian *costume* had much elegance—but my dear, dear Celia, do, in compassion to your sister, dress more like a *woman of fashion*—you have no idea how I shall be quizzed, if you are so rigid."

"The matter is easily adjusted," said our heroine; "I will decline all such parties, rather than subject you to mortification."

"Not for the world, my dear—you will, by mixing in society, learn the necessity of conforming to received opinions."

Celia was indisposed to argue the matter; and retiring early, in order to write to Mrs. Mansfield, left her sister in consultation with Minet, whose phrases and veering expres-

expressions were tedious to the unfashioned Celia. It was a painful duty to our candid heroine, to impart all she thought and felt in her new situation; yet she had promised to be explicit; thus, when she glanced on those weak sacrifices which Lady Townly made to fashion, though her terms were lenient, yet were they correct: but when she had occasion to record any amiable trait, that simplicity which characterized her feelings, gave to the hopeful semblance a colouring, that appeased the maternal heart of Mrs. Mansfield, and, in a degree, reconciled her to the separation.

Patty observed the folded letter on her mistress's table, as she attended her evening bell—"Dear Hadley!" said Patty, "I wish we were there again."

"You are not unhappy?" said our heroine.

"No, Miss Celia, I would not be so ungrateful as to say that, because they are all civil to me; but it is so confused, and some-

sometimes they laugh at Richard and I; only because we waited for the *grace* to be said at dinner, they set up such a shout; and to-night they wanted us to play at cards; and when I said, we never played but *twice* a-year at Hadley, on Madam's and your birth-day, they sneered so, I was quite provoked. 'I am sure,' says I, 'if you play for sixpences every night, I don't know what is to become of you when you fall sick; you can't save any wages.' Some of them looked angry, and they said *wages* were out of *fashion*—they call it *salary* now; but Mr. Donnel, Sir Harry's man, said I was a wise girl—and just now he asked me how much money I had in the Bank? and when I told him that my mistress took care of my money, and that I had sixty pounds by me, he was very civil in his words—indeed he is the best amongst them."

Celia perceived that the little property of her attendant was likely to make her the credulous victim of a *fashionable man*

in

in her own rank; she therefore, in the most cautious manner, guarded her against placing confidence in strangers; at the same time assuring her, that she would always find her ready to advise with her upon all occasions.

Patty thanked her mistress; but owned unfeigned surprise, at her young lady's explanation of Mr. Donnel's *probable* intention, in praising her prudence.

If Lady Townly was chagrined at the very plain dress of Miss Delacour, as she entered the drawing-room, previous to their departure for Lady Cardonnel's, next evening, the feeling was mutual, but from a different cause. Celia blushed, and seized the moment of Sir Harry's absence, to ask if her Ladyship purposed to venture out so thinly clothed?

"*Certainement*, my dear girl," said her Ladyship, laughing.

"Fanny, is it possible that married women sanction this extraordinary exposure of the person?"

"Posi-

"Positively you frighten me by your serious face," said her Ladyship, advancing to the mirror. "I am excessively well dressed to-night—*classical,* perfectly in *costume.* There is an infinity of taste in this drapery," she continued, waving a lace shade, fastened on one shoulder, and folded round her arm; "with a little *management,* its *effect* will be very *attractive.*"

Celia sighed—the idea of a *wife* and *mother* going into public with an *intention* to *attract* notice, seemed inexplicable to her. The Baronet entered, and Celia suppressed the half-formed sentiment that her sense of virtue had dictated.

Sir Harry smiled, as he scanned their dresses—"There is a purity in your mind, Celia, which extends to your dress," said he; "if your sex knew their interest, it would be their pride to *appear* like you—but *drapery, paint,* artificial *ringlets, tinsel,* &c. &c., are adopted *now* to that excess, that a *fashionable* female is a perfect doll."

"You

"You shall not make me angry," said Lady Townly; yet Celia thought her sister looked offended.

"My dear Townly," said our heroine, "you must not be so diffuse in your censure; remember I have not yet seen a mixed assembly, and have therefore my critique to make on the *gentlemen.* Such morning loungers as I have met, appear to me by no means deficient in vanity; nay, I really did feel some surprise, when I first heard that extraordinary noise made by a fashionable pair of *boots,* and the *gigantic spurs,* not omitting the *watch-chain,* carried from one waistcoat pocket to the other—but, above all, the *language* of the *men* surprises me; it never seems to advance beyond *chit-chat,* the mere garble of the newspapers, horses, carriages, and pugilism. I have not as yet heard, except from Mr. Belford, an expression that evinced an intellectual resource."

"It is too just," said the Baronet; "yet even this takes rise in the flimsiness of *fe-*

 male

male education. A man of refined sentiment has no claim to the favour of a modern belle; she could not discern his worth, nor he devote himself to such a nonentity. We could not expect a *barouche-driver*, a *buck*, to appreciate the charms of a *retired woman*—no, he selects a *dasher*, a *woman of figure*—who is a judge of *horses*—who understands all the technical terms of a *jockey*—one who twitches the arm of a *Buxton* blade (as she wades through the mud in Hyde Park), to point out a *bit of blood*, which she remembers to have won a plate at Egham, or any other race. But if the *early* instructions of women had been calculated to produce *respect* for their acquirements, not *astonishment*—if they were studious to *sooth*, rather than to *attract*, man is not so unaspiring, but that he would have studied to win their confidence, and wear their loves."

The carriage was announced.

"I thank you, my love, for that superior point of view in which you have placed

placed our sex," said Lady Townly, as, led by the Baronet, she descended the stairs.

"More of this anon," said Sir Harry, laughing.

Celia followed; and, in a few minutes, they were admitted at the mansion of Lady Cardonnel.

A suite of apartments, lighted with Shepherd's brilliant lamps, Oakley's *classical* furniture, after Hope's Treatise on Style, was a scene too new and various, not to own proportioned attraction for a novice like our heroine. She was led, according to the *usage of society*, to the Lady-hostess —"Most excessively kind"—"I am very happy," was the jargon, as she pressed the fingers of Celia.

"My dear Townly, you look charmingly."

Celia looked around her; numbers were promenading the rooms in parties—many laughing immoderately—others, in half whispers, remarking and quizzing the dresses.

Sir Harry was compelled to smile, when Celia expressed her surprise at the *opera hats* of the gentlemen.

" Are they not very *outre ?*" said she.

" No doubt they appear so," said the Baronet ; " yet custom has reconciled us to them in a degree—they are general," and he pointed to the one he carried.

" The constant use of the eye-glass is affected and oppressive," said Celia.

Sir Harry agreed to this.

" And what an odd, yet frequent habit, I observe amongst the men, that of placing their hair, and, literally, combing the head with the fingers—is it to give them *height* that they do this ? or is it *fashionable* to look as if they were *frightened ?*"

" Celia," said the Baronet, smiling, " this is the *retort courteous*—I find you can be saucy."

" No, really I am serious," continued our heroine ; " remember I make my remarks in confidence ; yet the oddity of all these things has occurred to me."

" Bel-

" Belford," said Sir Harry, laying his hand on the shoulder of his friend.

Mr. Belford dropped Lady Bab Blindon and her party, and joined Celia—" How do you like this *mob?*" said Mr. Belford.

Celia declared she could not tell yet.

The Baronet repeated all she had been saying.

Belford laughed immoderately—" Formerly," said he, " we were all *petit maitres*, now we are the aspiring compeers of our *grooms*; but *Fashion* may elicit something *nouvelle* ere long—*I* should not be surprised to see the discarded *queue* suspended to the *ear*, such are the revolutions of the goddess."

" A revolution !" said Lady Bab Blindon, who had caught only this word *en passant*, " where ? tell me, I beseech you ?" and she made a line, with two other ladies, before our heroine and her attendants.

" Very warm this evening," said her Ladyship ; " it will be *immense* by and bye."

Celia thought it warm, and she said so.

"But the revolution, Belford, that we may have time to consider where we should bury our treasures."

"It is a mere report," replied Belford, with a comprehensive glance; "they say, that the English ladies have come to a determination to be less *prodigal* of their charms."

"What a bore!" said Lady Bab, tapping him with her fan, and passing on.

"It will be a *revolution* in the present *costume* nevertheless," said Belford.

"You are a ridiculous creature," she added, laughing over her shoulder.

"It is a period devoutly to be wished," thought Celia, while the blush that passed over her cheek repressed the *gaîté* of her companion.

"How d'ye do?" said Miss Desmond, as she tripped after her mama, and joined Lady Frost and Mrs. Vermont.

Lord Ernmore advanced—"Who is that divine

divine girl?" said he, in a half whisper, to Mr. Belford.

"A very *rational mortal,*" replied Belford, introducing our heroine.

"Are we to have any music?" said my Lord; "I know Cardonnel likes to show off."

At that moment the sounds of the harp and piano, touched in prelude, caught their ear—Celia turned intuitively.

"Not yet," said Belford, "we shall be in time."

They strolled through the rooms; as they returned, Mr. Danbury joined them —"How infinitely beyond my hopes is this!" said he, bowing to Celia.

"You have seen her before?" said Lord Ernmore to Mr. Danbury.

The latter smiled, with an air of triumph.

"Ernmore," said Lady Frost, "I am fatigued to death; give me your arm," and she drew the entangled Lord from a contemplation inimical to her plans.

"I have been looking for you this half hour," said Lady Bab to her brother; "I want my pocket-handkerchief."

Mr. Danbury drew it from his pocket, and presented it.

Celia smiled—we will not say but that she thought it *more* than *ridiculous*.

A "manuscript song" was whispered through the rooms—the company hastened to the music-room—"Who's the author?" was the general question.

"Do, learn," says Miss Dolce, a transparent damsel, who leaned on the arm of Lady Bab.

Mr. Danbury returned—"They say it is Lutin's."

The ladies fled to the inner apartment.

"I would not lose a word for the universe," said Lady Bab.

"Is the gentleman a great poet?" asked Celia.

"The Caledonian *Reviewers* say the contrary," replied Belford; "but you and I will be content to listen at a distance;

sounds

sounds are improved by distance; we shall get the better part of it, for the music will be pleasing, no doubt."

There was a correctness in the decisions of Mr. Belford, that at once informed and bounded the curiosity of his hearers. Celia gave her attention to the harmony, and was pleased.

"*Bravé, bravo, bravissimo!*" was echoed through the circle, as Lady Cardonnel closed the song, with an *affetuosa* perfectly in *character* with the *words*—the torrent issued from the harmonic sphere, each warbling a strain of the enchanting composition.

"You lost a great deal," said Lady Townly, as she passed her sister, with a gentleman, with whom she seemed talking in a most vivacious manner.

"And we were *spared* something," said Belford, with an expressive smile.

"Lutin has been vastly successful in this ballad," said Miss Desmond. "I will

send

send to Hookham's to-morrow, and bespeak it, the moment it appears."

"To beguile the time while you are *cobbling*," said Belford, ironically.

"Did you ever hear such a torment as he is?" said Miss Desmond—"My dear creature," continued the familiar fashionable, "do you know," taking the arm of Celia, "that you have made *three* conquests?—yes, actually it is a fact," perceiving the smile that our heroine accorded; "but you are unfortunate, for they are all *engaged* men."

"How lamentable!" said Celia, laughing.

"Ernmore is quite *penserosa*; Danbury is in raptures; and poor Bridoon has done nothing but talk of you these two days," continued Miss Desmond.

"Ernmore is bound by a *Frost*," said Belford; "Danbury's *raptures* will, like all his caprices, yield to the next new attraction; "and Bridoon's *ruminations*

must

must be nearly at an end, for he never *talked* or *thought* on any subject, for three days together."

"It is really quite provoking," said Miss Desmond; "you derange one's ideas so. I was going to tell Miss Delacour a few of the handsome things I had heard said of her, and you have put them out of my head."

"I forgive you most cordially, Madam," said Celia.

"You will be spoiled, I perceive," said Miss Desmond, as she took the arm of Mrs. Vermont, and drew her on one side, for the express purpose of laughing at our heroine, whose *chaste* style of dress, and perfect indifference to her very interesting communication, had excited the indignation of the little babbler.

Sir Harry, who had been engaged in a distant apartment, looking over a card-table, now approached.

"What is the hour?" asked Celia, in a low voice.

"Just

"Just twelve," said the Baronet.

"You will attend me?" said Celia.

Sir Harry instantly assented.

"Where are you going in such a hurry?" said Lady Townly, who, with Lady Cardonnel, intercepted their passing.

"Belford will take charge of *you*, Fanny," said the Baronet; "we are going home."

"Home!" said Lady Cardonnel; "what do you mean?"

"*Mon Dieu!*" said Lady Townly, "I had forgot — haste, my dear *Cinderella*, pray goodness you may not find the *carriage* transformed to a *pumpkin*, and the servants to *mice*."

Celia coloured; her glistening eyes seemed to reproach the ungrateful levity. Curtsying her adieus, she gave her hand to Sir Harry, and retired.

Mr. Belford followed to the carriage; and though he returned to take charge of the

the volatile Lady Townly, the task was irksome.

"Have any of ye seen a *glass slipper?*" asked Lady Cardonnel of her admiring friends, for every body admires the *wit* of a *rout-giving* lady.

"Who has lost one?" said Danbury.

"A fair nymph has just withdrawn, because the hour of midnight was passed," said her Ladyship; "I am sure we shall find the *slipper*, if we look about us."

"La! how droll!" says Miss Desmond.

"A shoe of this sort is above *your* art," said Mr. Belford, addressing the fair mechanic.

"I should like to be able to make a pair of *glass shoes*," said Miss Desmond, looking thoughtfully.

"Let me entreat of you to desist," replied Belford, with a look of keen satire; "for, Heaven knows, the *slips* and *tumbles* that occur daily, evince that packthread and leather are not *sure footing* in these perilous

perilous times—*glass shoes!* I sicken at the idea."

The ladies were half angry; Miss Desmond ran away; but the cheerful rattle of a Scotch reel, struck up by Lord Ernmore, put the ladies and beaux into motion. Mr. Belford seized the moment to advise Lady Townly to forego her satire, at the expence of the most amiable and well-judging woman in existence—"You err deeply," said this true friend, "when you venture a sarcasm in this case—in fact, you draw a censure on yourself."

Lady Townly looked towards her companion with displeasure.

"I do not value your anger," said Mr. Belford; "reflect one moment on the advantages which your sister possesses; her youth, beauty, her *natural* beauty, and her divine humility, then let me ask you who has the superiority? Come," continued he, "let us retire, nor allow a young and *unengaged* woman to set an example to a *wife* and *mother.*"

"Order the carriage," said Lady Townly, in a faltering voice.

Mr. Belford gladly obeyed her commands; and in less than an hour after our heroine had retired, Lady Townly arrived in Portman-square.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

——"for nothing lovelier can be found
In woman, than to study household good."

THE countenance of the Baronet, next morning, bore strong indications of a disordered frame. Celia regarded him with affectionate interest—she whispered her fears to her sister. Lady Townly took fright—the whole house was in motion—and a physician had arrived, ere the Baronet had spoken a word on the subject; yet he did not deny to the discerning eye of Doctor Walton, that he *felt* ill, who, ordering quiet and a little nursing, took leave.

It was now that Celia extended her knowledge of fashionable life. Nothing could be more distinct, than that system of officious confusion which reigned throughout

out the house, and the *silent*, yet *active*, solicitude which *her* feelings dictated. She feared to press *her* opinion, for Lady Townly was all *nerve;* she ordered the *house* to be kept free from *noise*, yet was continually *pulling* the bells. She tormented her husband by numberless questions, as to what he could fancy to eat; and when he declined nourishment, she wept, and declared herself the most unfortunate of women—all her best endeavours were treated with *indifference*.

Sir Harry *looked* concerned, but was really too ill to reply.

During the day, Mr. Belford visited the chamber of his friend: he waited the evening call of Dr. Walton; when, learning that it was a case in which no danger was apprehended, he took leave.

Celia awaited her sister's arrangement for the night; but when she saw her Ladyship take leave of the Baronet, and seek repose in a distant apartment, her warm heart rejected all the *farcical exhibitions* of anxiety

anxiety that had been displayed through the day. "Is this the duty of a wife?" thought Celia; "if I know my heart, I could not be at ease, in such a case, unless I watched his pillow. I *trust* there is no danger," continued our unfashionable heroine, as she reluctantly withdrew to her chamber.

That prayer is efficacious in calming the spirits, needs no illustration—that the devout *humility* of a *pure* heart is not only peculiarly acceptable to the benign Creator, but even in *this* life blessed with gracious promise, is a consolation, we *trust*, experienced by many. Celia owned the fullness of this sublime hope, as she arose with the dawn, and creeping softly to the anti-room of the Baronet, listened for some time unobserved: at length the door opened; and Mrs. Wilson, the housekeeper, issued forth.

"Dear me, Miss, you quite startled me," said Mrs. Wilson.

"How is Sir Harry?" asked Celia.

"Why

"Why better, Miss; he has had but a poorish sort of a night, I believe, for I heard him very wakeful: but he has slept for two hours; and I asked him just now how he was, and he said much refreshed."

"Has he taken any nourishment?" said Celia.

"None at all, Miss."

Celia begged Mrs. Wilson to remain with her in the anti-room, and leave the door open.

Mrs. Wilson took a seat, and in less than five minutes dropped into a composed sleep.

"It is absolutely necessary that our kindred should attend in these cases," said our heroine mentally; "this woman, even admitting that she may be zealous in her wish to be useful, wants the tender interest that shrinks from self-indulgence, and is *vigilant* from *love*, as well as *principle*."

"Wilson!" said Sir Harry.

Wilson was snoring.

 Celia

Celia flew to his bedside. "My dear Townly," said the zealous Celia, "how are you?"

"Much better, Celia," said the Baronet; "but why are you up so early? take care of yourself, my dear girl—I should be miserable, if you suffered from the benignity of your disposition."

"I am a very conceited nurse," said Celia, "and somewhat peremptory; only say what I can do for your comfort, but no alking."

Sir Harry, in a voice tremulous from *feeling*, expressed a wish for some breakfast.

Celia departed; she awoke the unwieldy nurse; and leaving her in charge of her master, repaired to give directions for its being brought. She was correct in her opinions, though the warmth of her heart sometimes elicited feelings which the listless and insensible (from not comprehending in their own bosoms) were prone to censure. She carried the pleasing tidings

dings to her sister, whom she found half dressed, though not *unstudious* of her *appearance.* Celia paused, as she beheld artificial bloom being placed on a cheek where *tenderness* should have stamped the lily's hue. "Townly is better," said our heroine.

"Have you seen Wilson?" asked her Ladyship.

Celia explained—"Never mind your toilet," said Celia; "Harry wishes to see you, no doubt."

Lady Townly arose, and followed to the chamber of her husband. "Your deputy nurse makes a favourable report," said her Ladyship, as she took the hand of the Baronet.

"She is a pattern of female excellence, Fanny," said the grateful Townly.

"She is used to study these matters," said her Ladyship, somewhat haughtily.

"And why should not all women consider these tender offices worthy of their study? or, rather, why are they not, as

with her, the spontaneous charm that exalts them above themselves, and makes them little less than angels?"

"Do, Celia, feel his pulse," said Lady Townly; "his fever must be high."

"Childish, giddy girl," said the Baronet, relaxing the hand he had detained, while endeavouring to engage her attention.

Celia made the breakfast for the invalid; and as she placed the cup in the hand of her sister, and bade her give it to her husband, she, in a low voice, but in gentlest terms, reminded her of those regrets she had heard her so recently express, when lamenting her want of *reflection*.

Now this was the moment in which Lady Townly *ought* to have reflected, and it was precisely *that* in which she could not bring herself to think; like every being who wants *self-confidence*, she found it necessary to support her spirits, because she felt her unworthiness; yet when no immediate cause for regret existed, she looked

back, and wondered how she had ever been so remiss.

To such readers of *sensibility*, as shall glance over these pages, we could illustrate nothing that their *delicacy* would not suggest. Where an amiable being *suffered*, in a case transient as the Baronet's, to *those incapable* of attaching interest to *such* a scene, we say nothing; and in pity to the *ennui* it might occasion, we will not detain them them *too* long in the sick-chamber.

Suffice it to say, that the attack, though severe, was in two or three days much subdued.

Doctor Walton attributed it to a sudden chill.

Sir Harry left his chamber, and reclined in a small book-room adjoining.

Mr. Belford had been admitted more than once; but it was in the society of Celia and his daughter, that Sir Harry owned his happiness.

Lady Townly never appeared to so little

 advantage;

advantage; she was out of humour with herself, yet took no pains to claim respect.

"Celia," said Sir Harry, one morning, "you are formed for domestic life; would to Heaven I could see you the wife of a man whom I love as a brother!"

Celia smiled—"I entertain such exalted notions of the state," said she, "in fact, I should make you angry, if I were to betray half my vanity in this respect, that I must be silent—nay, I am persuaded I shall never marry."

"Never marry!" said the Baronet, with a languid smile; "God forbid!—ah, my dear girl, there is a noble heart waits your acceptance, if you could overlook a little disparity in ages."

"Not a word, my dear Harry," said our heroine; "I repeat, I never may marry; but if I do, my *love* must grow out of *circumstances*, not out of *friendship*."

"I did not think you so romantic," said the Baronet.

"It is not romance," said Celia; "it is *vanity*,

vanity, Townly." She took up a book—it was Milton's Paradise Lost: "How beautiful!" said Celia—

"*He* for God only, *she* for God in him."

Sir Harry was replying, when Belford and Doctor Walton were announced.

Belford drew the volume from the hand of Celia—"How suited to this nether state are the sublime sentiments of the immortal poet!" said he; and he directed the eye of Celia to that passage in which Adam regrets the weakness of our general mother. Celia glanced over the lines; while Belford, as he retook the volume, unconsciously heaved a sigh.

"Let me prescribe," said Doctor Walton, smiling; "read the lines."

Mr. Belford complied.

——————————"for either
He never shall find out fit mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake,
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain
Through her perverseness, but shall see her gain'd

By

By a far worse; or if she love, withheld
By parents, or his happiest choice, too *late*
Shall meet, already linkt and wedlock bound
To a fell adversary, his hate or shame:
Which infinite calamity shall cause
To human life, and household peace confound."

"As *experienced married* men," said Doctor Walton, "neither my friend Townly or myself can recommend any specific, save *patience*, in the two or three *first* instances; in the *last*, *honour* only can be effectual—the physician's art does not extend to the medicine for the mind. I trust *your* case is not hopeless," continued the Doctor, smiling; "if it is, vent your spleen, as *bachelors* usually do; and if my memory is not defective, you will discover, in the same page, an appropriate line; ask why Heaven did

————————" create at last
This novelty on earth, this fair defect
Of nature?"

"Not I," said Belford; "what my *soul*
was

was formed to worship, my *tongue* shall never deny."

"He's past cure, I perceive," said Walton, rising. "Well, now I must see your cook or housekeeper; I wish to order some chicken-broth for my patient."

"I will take your directions, Sir," said Celia, addressing the Doctor.

"Madam!" said Mr. Walton, in surprise.

Sir Harry smiled—"Miss Delacour is serious," said he.

"Is she?" said the Doctor, resuming his seat; "then, my good young lady, perhaps you understand *how* this simple process is performed, *without* my instructions. When I give my orders to servants *accustomed* only to invent *luxuriant* artifices, which are, in *fact*, the *stable* support of *my* profession, I am *strict*, in order that my patients may not be *poisoned*, while under my care; but when a lady of your age has *condescended* to acquire such a *necessary* quality, I would not presume to dictate.

dictate. Sir Harry, I leave you in good hands," said the Doctor; and bowing to our heroine, he retired.

"Now for a dissertation on cookery," says the yawning reader; "a *method* that is to refute the *established* system of Dame Glasse, or any *other* dame who has written on the culinary art." No such thing, my *anticipating* fair; we would merely say, that Celia *directed* the making of the broth. With due *deference* to the *accomplished* Mrs. Wilson, she did more—she *hastened* the performance, with all that zeal so *consoling* to an expecting invalid; for how *often*, between the *period* of an *ordered* nourishment and its *arrival*, does the anxious patient lose the *inclination* to partake of it. Our heroine awaited its arrival, and, receiving it from the hands of Mrs. Wilson, was proceeding from the drawing-room to the sick apartment, when Lady Cardonnel, accompanied by Lady Bab Blindon, ascended the stairs.

"My fair Cinderella," said Lady Cardonnel,

donnel, "what, in the name of Fortune, have you got there?"

Lady Bab raised her eye-glass—"*Mon Dieu*," said she, "what an *interesting* nurse!"

"I will attend you presently," said Celia; "my sister is in the drawing-room:" and she passed on.

Mr. Belford was reading to the Baronet; as our heroine placed the waiter on the table, he closed the book, and in silent admiration regarded her manner.

Sir Harry dashed the tear of *grateful* sensibility from his cheek; and, as he received the welcome beverage from her hand, "Celia, *these* are the *feminine* virtues," said he.

"Is not Townly very fashionable?" said Celia, addressing Mr. Belford; "observe what high terms he gives to the simplest duties."

"They are perfectly in place," replied Belford; and rising hastily, he quitted the room.

Celia was surprised at the abruptness of his departure.

The Baronet owned no surprise—"Rachel," said Sir Harry, "go, tell your mama I wish to see her."

"She has company," said Celia.

"If they are *known* to you," continued he, "go, take her place, Celia."

Our heroine complied; and delivering the message of the Baronet, joined the ladies and Mr. Belford.

"We were speaking of you," said Lady Cardonnel: "Belford is a known *encourager* of *genius*; and I was representing to him, that it might be *possible* to get you a *patent* for making *broth*."

"An excellent idea!" said Lady Bab: "Count Rumford attained a patent for a *grate*, you know; and the *Delacour soup* would *sound well*, I declare."

"You perceive how *futile* your wit is," said Belford, directing the eyes of the ladies to our heroine. "Miss Delacour has performed a *rare*, but very *becoming*, duty in

in her sex; it is consistent with her character to be superior in *all* the *feminine* graces: thus your *badinage* is shaftless."

Celia blushed at the compliment, though the *satire* of these votaries of fashion had not the power to effect such a sensation.

"Positively, I thought she looked very *interesting*," said Lady Bab.

"In that *case*," said Belford, "you would *assume* the character instantly; but if it was simply asserted that the act was *amiable*, it would own no charm with you. There is not such a creature *now* as an *amiable* woman—they are *lovely*, *fascinating*, or *dashing*; their *loveliness* is the production of Gattie—their *fascination*, the manners of a *Circe*—and their *dash*, a *masculine notoriety*, as *unbecoming* in their *sex*, as *prejudicial* to their *morals*."

"It is well that *your* influence is proscribed," said Lady Bab, "or we should sink into the merest housewives in existence; and I much doubt, my good, moral Belford, if your *earlier* days have not been

tinctured

tinctured by glaring derelictions, your *censure* is so unlimited; nay, you speak as from *internal* conviction."

"But as none of *us* can *remember* the antediluvian *epoch*," said Lady Cardonnel, rising, with a sarcastic smile, "it would be useless to weary ourselves by conjecture. Your sister is engaged, I conclude," she continued; and curtsying somewhat formally, the assimilating friends withdrew.

Mr. Belford, who had been eloquent, even to *severity*, while the ladies were present, soon retired, as Celia thought, *depressed*.

She forbore to seek her sister, conjecturing, rightly, that the Baronet's conference was of a domestic nature.

The observations that our heroine had made since her arrival in London, were not favourable, or at all suited, to its boasted *preeminence* and *refinements*; "and I perceive," said Celia, mentally, "that a *domestic education* is a *point* at which

unqualified satire levels its arrows—I cannot see *why;* and until I am converted from an opinion *long* cherished, by an *evident* proof of its inefficiency, I *must* believe that the *retiredness* of *woman* is not only her *security*, but her *bliss*."

CHAP. IX.

"What makes man wretched? happiness *denied?*
Lorenza! no: 'tis happiness *disdained.*
She comes too meanly drest to win our smile;
And calls herself *Content,* a homely name!
Our flame is *Transport,* and *Content* our scorn."

Sir Harry Townly, though a reasonable and amiable man, had no right to *expect domestic* happiness; he had selected, as his wife, a handsome, and, according to the *general* acceptation, an accomplished woman; he had chosen her, as a *patron* of the *arts* becomes the owner of a fine picture—She was the *rage,* talked of by many an indigent *connoisseur* in beauty; but *she* was above their *purchase.* Sir Harry became the envied possessor; and, like some *amateurs,* we fear, discovered *too* late, that the *picture* was not worth the *price he* had given.

given. So implicitly had the Baronet relied upon the good disposition of his lady, that, though by no means blind to her vanities, he *believed* she would, in *time*, be all he wished: but time had stolen on, and she was yet thoughtless, and devoted to a life of fashion. He had *remonstrated, persuaded,* and at last yielded to her caprices. His boy was taken from them—this was the moment to awaken reflection—it availed nothing; and, as a last resource, he drew Celia from the bosom of quiet, to effect the so-much-wished, though almost hopeless reformation. Those *domestic* qualities which our heroine had exercised in her short visit, were so many lively sources of regret to Sir Harry. All his eloquence failed to inspire the volatile Fanny with a particle of emulation; she was copious in her admiration of Celia, but always concluded by declaring, "that when she should discover such *qualities* were gaining ground in *society,* she would be found in the *train.*" The Baronet sighed; and in the last con-

ference which he held on the subject, and which took place on Celia's intimation to her Ladyship to attend Sir Harry, she had appeared so little conciliating, so desirous of hastening the interview, that, in the language of the *first* disappointed *husband,* he was tempted to say—

"Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more."

Celia had been in London near three weeks, when a note from Lady Berton apprised her of the family's arrival in Hanover-square. Taking Rachel and her nurse as companions, and Richard as her attendant, she walked, to answer the note in person.

Sir Peter and Lady Berton were descended from an ancient and honourable family; their lives had been passed in the country, excepting only three months in each year, when they made their excursions to the metropolis, for the express purpose of attending the birth-days of the King and Queen. *Loyal* from *principle,* and

and *attached*, from a *natural* respect to virtue, their homage was consistent.

Celia met these early friends of her youth with all the warmth of affection. A thousand inquiries were made as to the looks and spirits of her aunt—nor were the villagers omitted.

Lady Berton was qualified to assure her in each particular; and our heroine, in this reunion, owned the superiority of *unfashioned* friendship.

"We are all impatience to meet George," said Lady Berton; "I dispatched a messenger last night to acquaint him of our arrival; but, unfortunately, too late—he is gone to the country, to attend the wedding of a friend."

"This is Lady Townly's little girl," said Sir Peter; "she is like her mother, Celia. Well, how do you like London? have you been obliged to give up country habits?"

"Not *materially*, I hope," said Celia.

"I am sure you have not," said Lady Berton; "as nothing but *mistaken* condescension

scension could induce such an error—and I know you are *above* that."

Celia explained, and submitted her conduct to the investigation of her partial friends.

"It is a red-letter book as yet," said Lady Berton, smiling; "we were speaking of you at the manor-house the night before last, and we agreed there was nothing to *fear* in your *visit,* though much to *regret* in your absence."

"I shall be more at ease, now you are so nigh," said Celia; "you will find me troublesome."

"We shall expect you to come to us for a week or two," said Sir Peter; "Mrs. Mansfield promised us such a comfort."

Celia cheerfully acquiesced in a proposal so suited to her wishes.

"We must call on Lady Townly," said Lady Berton; "I know how *she* estimates country friends: but she shall not suppose that we are going to assume new charac-

ters

ters—if she admits us, it is well; if not, we must bear the disappointment."

Celia endeavoured to exonerate her sister in part; but Sir Peter declared her eloquence must fail, "as the papers he had just been reading eminently displayed the estimation in which Lady Townly was held;" and he proceeded to read the paragraph to which he referred: it ran thus—

"It is with pleasure we announce, that the lovely Lady Townly *again* graces those circles of which she is the admired ornament. Her Ladyship's *partial* seclusion has been deeply felt; and the lovers of true taste will be happy to hear that the family mansion in Portman-square will shortly be the *scene* of much elegant *festivity.*"

"How extraordinary!" said Celia; "I am a stranger to all this; nay, it is absolutely false, for I heard Townly say this morning, that he would avoid all large parties, by not giving one at home."

"Did Fanny agree to it?" asked Sir Peter.

"She did not absolutely *agree*," said Celia.

"Then we shall find the *wife* and the *newspaper* will conquer the *husband* and his *resolutions*," said Sir Peter, laughing.

"Have you never met George since your arrival?" said Lady Berton.

Celia replied in the negative.

"I rejoice at it," said her Ladyship; "I should like to surprise him into a meeting—he will not know you, I am persuaded. Come to us as soon as possible, my dear Celia; my matron heart is not half satisfied in the commencement of my present visit—I expected that our son would have waited our arrival—to be sure, a wedding is an important attraction."

Celia promised to be in Hanover-square in two days; and taking leave, proceeded towards home. In crossing Oxford-street, she recognised Mr. Belford, who, dropping

ping the arm of the gentleman with whom he was walking, joined our heroine.

Celia gladly accepted the protection of Mr. Belford—unused to the gaze of the multitude, she was oppressed, even to confusion, by that admiration, which was, in *fact*, but the usage of men accustomed to society.

Mr. Belford smiled as he saw her avert her head, to avoid those glances which were actual *condescensions*.

"Ah, Belford!" said Mr. Danbury, as he issued from a bookseller's; "a lovely morning—most excessively attractive," continued Mr. Danbury, addressing Celia.

Celia curtsied; she could not reply, for Mr. Danbury was *eyeing* a lonely *pedestrian*, dressed in the most *expensive* style. She knew not whether the *remark* applied to the *day*, or to the *creature* of the *day*.

"It is a horrible bore to be troubled with country commissions," said Danbury. "Hanson has desired me to select a lady's library;

library; and I have been these two hours looking out a hundred volumes, though I took the greater part on the bookseller's recommendation—they know what *suits*, and it saved me some trouble."

"Hanson is obliged to you," said Mr. Belford; "I should like to see your selection—all *modern*, I suppose."

"Chiefly," said Danbury; "the *living* poets, *piquant* novelists, and philosophical *deists*, of themselves make a book-stand."

"If they made a *bonfire*, it would be better," said Belford.

"Upon my soul, you are unmerciful," replied Danbury; "do you expect women to devote themselves to history alone? is not light reading absolutely necessary at times? I declare there is nothing more pleasant than a pocket volume—I hate a long chain of circumstance—it loads the brain; ———, for instance, is highly entertaining."

"Yet

"Yet there you must refer to your Latin Grammar," said Belford.

"No, upon my soul; I gulp what I don't understand."

"You remind me of the Dean," said Belford, "who, in one of his admirable satires, says—'The most accomplished way of using books at present is, to serve them, as some do lords—learn their *titles*, and then brag of their acquaintance.'"

"Is he not impertinent?" said Danbury to our heroine.

"I am a stranger to modern literature," said Celia; "excepting the elegant 'Minstrel,' and some few others."

"A just reserve," said Belford; "Scot's 'Lay,' Crabb's 'Scenes of Nature,' to be *felt* and understood by every heart—yes, these shall live when their authors are no more: but to hear *every rhymer* dignified a poet, when we can turn to the pages of a Johnson, a Young, and a Pope, I blush for the degeneracy of British taste."

"Adieu!"

"Adieu!" said Danbury, as he arrested one of the "*Four-in-Hand Club*," in his progress towards Cumberland Gate, who,

> "As he pass'd the gazing throng,
> With graceful ease, and smack'd the thong,
> The idiot wonder they express'd,
> Was praise and transport to his breast."

"How extraordinary!" said our heroine; "to me there does not appear any division of time set apart for *study*: in the *morning*, indeed far beyond the *natural* term of mid-day, the men are *jockies*, or *loungers*; the short interval between *that* period and the dinner-hour is, of course, devoted to *dressing*; and from the pleasures of the *table* they seldom retire until almost midnight; parties succeed: is it not a most thoughtless course for *rational* beings? I was prepared to meet *gaiety* and *profusion*; but such *general dissipation* I did not expect to find tolerated."

"There are a few dissenters," said Mr.

Belford; "a few who mix *cautiously* in the vortex, and retire with conscious superiority; they are not *estimated* by the fashionable rabble, who rather *suffer*, than *desire* their society: yet I ever observe, that *virtue*, though *differently appreciated*, has always the power to claim a *portion* of respect."

"It would be grievous to think, it did not," said Celia, as she entered the dwelling of Sir Harry.

"My dear sister," said Lady Townly, "I have been miserable in your absence, and have just dispatched a servant with Rachel's parasol—she will be quite a gipsey, if we expose her to the sun at this season."

Celia smiled—"If your misery proceeds from so trivial a cause," said she, "take comfort; the morning is cool, and I do not believe we are either of us injured by our walk."

"Bathe Miss Townly's face with rose-

water," resumed her Ladyship, addressing Martin; "and remember, from this day, she must use her parasol."

Martin withdrew.

"What a pity!" said Celia; "consider, my dear Fanny, how dangerous such solicitude about your child's *person* must be —she will attach the idea of *beauty* to the use of rose-water, and you will deter her from useful *exercise*, by placing an *affected* appendage of fashion in her hands.—I often smile," continued Celia, "when I reflect how you and I reached our twelfth year, or more, without carrying this *indispensable* shade. There were no skipping-ropes or dumb-bells when I was a child; yet *health* and *activity* devised such exertions as, I *believe*, answered *all* the purposes, without the exhibition."

"Just so," replied Belford; "and here again my remark holds good—they must be *amused*, even in the most simple particular: neither skipping-ropes or dumb-bells are exceptionable in *themselves*; but if

if we *anticipate every* thing for a child, we curb the genius—there can be no imagination where there is no invention. Observe the children of the poor—see their happiness, when, by *reflection* and *industry*, they have achieved some *clumsy* imitation of a *splendid* toy; can a child of luxury, *oppressed* by the *variety* of its *amusements*, own a pleasure equal to their's?"

"I declare you remind me of a most ludicrous scene, in which I was a *party*," said Lady Townly: "Celia, do you remember our travels in the hall, at Hadley, when you and I used to be seated in a box, and old Thomson was the horse?"

"Perfectly," said Celia; "and no equipage in which I have *since* travelled, ever appeared half so pleasant."

"The reason is obvious," said Mr. Belford; "your *own* ingenuity effected your happiness; and in all our later enjoyments, we are dependants on the tastes of others."

"Are the Bertons primitive as ever?" asked Lady Townly, addressing Celia.

"They

"They are well," said our heroine, disregarding the remark of her sister; "and I have promised to go to them for a week."

"I cannot consent to this—how could you think of making such a sacrifice, Celia?"

"It will be no sacrifice; believe me, Fanny, I consider it a great pleasure."

"Did you see George?"

Celia replied in the negative.

"Is it Sir Peter Berton of whom you speak?" asked Mr. Belford.

Lady Townly explained.

"I did not know they were in town," said Mr. Belford; "Lady Berton is a connection of my mother's; I have not seen her these two years. Then you know George Berton?" continued Belford.

Celia replied, that their early days had been passed in much friendship; but that Mr. Berton's removal to college, and subsequent study of the law, had wholly estranged them.

"It

"It is nearly five years since I last saw him," said Celia.

"George is a very fine young man," said Mr. Belford, "but too volatile; he is now gone into Wiltshire, with Bridoon, to be present at his marriage."

"Is George Berton the associate of *such* a man?" said Celia.

"My dear unfashionable girl," said Lady Townly, "the Berton *you* knew, and the Berton *now* known in the higher circles, are very distinct creatures. Townly never behaves commonly civil to him, or you would have seen him here; yet he is a very elegant young man: and as to his being the friend of Bridoon, let me beg of you, Celia, not to speak of *him* thus; your taste will be *justly* condemned, for no man stands higher in the scale of fashion than Bridoon."

"That is to say," retorted Belford, "that he is the most conspicuous blockhead of the day.—I know not that I should have sought

sought the society of Lady Berton just now," said Belford, "if Miss Delacour had not said she should be their visitor for a period. I have *some* reasons for declining the meeting."

"Then why forego your inclinations on my account?" said Celia, with unfashioned simplicity.

"Because," said Mr. Belford, with a cheek more than ordinarily flushed, "I have not philosophy enough to withstand what owns so strong a charm with me, an intellectual intercourse. The Bertons are *content* in *virtue;* no adventitious aids are necessary to make their *home* delightful; they have judgment to reject the boisterous intrusions of folly, though their delicacy makes them the *lenient* arbiters of its thoughtless devotees. I shall see you frequently during your visit," said Mr. Belford, as he withdrew.

Celia was led to reflect on the very marked manners of the amiable Belford; and

and it now first occurred to her, that it was to him Sir Harry alluded, when speaking on the subject of marriage—"The *preference* of a man of honour is always a flattering *distinction*," said she, mentally; "but where we are *uninterested*, it is coquetry to encourage attentions. I may be wrong," continued the humble Celia; "yet were I, as Fanny says, in 'search of a husband,' of all I have seen, *he* is most worthy of regard: but *he* is not the *man* my ideas have fancied—and have I really imagined a creature with whom my heart could associate?—it will assuredly *end* in *imagination*," said she, rising, and walking to the window.

"Celia," said Lady Townly, "your ruminations have been very serious for the last five minutes: has Belford been making love to you? I begin to suspect he is your slave."

Celia denied the charge; and taking her work-box, proceeded to employ herself in flowering a cap for Mrs. Wilkins, of

whom she was not unmindful, though distant.

In a few minutes a very lovely woman was announced, by the name of Welgrave.

Lady Townly received her with much respect.

Mrs. Welgrave was young, unaffected, and, according to our heroine's taste, dressed with more elegance than any female *she* had seen since her arrival.

The conversation became interesting.

Celia was charmed by her manners; she appeared at no loss for a subject, though *fashions* were not glanced at during her stay.

"My dear Lady Townly," said Mrs. Welgrave, "may I ask your assistance?" and she stated a very *simple*, yet pathetic tale of a widow in distress, left with a small family, and wholly without support. "Will you help me a *little?*" continued she: "I wish to put her in a way of providing for her family."

Celia drew her purse spontaneously.

"The

"The fact touches every *wife* and *mother*," said Mrs. Welgrave; "and I have some hopes of effecting my plan."

"You are likely to be deceived in these sort of persons," said Lady Townly; "and really I am *almost* a beggar myself just now."

Celia gave her *mite*, with a face glowing with shame—"If you have not your purse," said she, addressing her sister, "use mine;" and she presented it to her Ladyship.

"You have the advantage of me, Celia," said Lady Townly; "you wear *pockets*;" and she drew the string, and placed a guinea in the hands of Mrs. Welgrave.

The fair daughter of Charity looked towards our heroine with a smile of infinite beauty—"You have not discarded your *pockets*," said she.

Celia declared, that no consideration whatever could induce *her* to dispense with them.

"They are certainly very *useful*," replied

plied Mrs. Welgrave; "and I do not perceive that *your* figure is in the least injured by wearing them."

"That is so like *all* your placid *rubs*," said Lady Townly; "I know you would say *more*, if you did not consider me as a very *pauper* at this moment."

"I would not wish you to impress Miss Delacoür with an idea that I am *ever* saucy," said Mrs. Welgrave, smiling; "but really, my dear Lady Townly, I cannot resist saying, that when we put it out of our *power* to be *charitable*, merely because we will look *fashionable*, it places our *feelings* in a very doubtful point of view."

"Aye, there it is," said her Ladyship; "I knew you would give me a cut."

"No, it is only a gentle philippic," continued Mrs. Welgrave, rising; "I consider *you* as possessing a very good heart, but you sometimes suffer it to slumber. My esteem for you alone propels my presumption;" and retiring, with a grace peculiarly

culiarly her own, she left our heroine to admire and expatiate on her character.

"What a charming creature!" said Celia, as she watched her departure from the window; "how easy and natural are her manners!—you must recommend me to her favour, Fanny."

"You have done *that* for yourself," said Lady Townly; "she will draw upon your *purse*, now she knows you *wear* pockets, and have a melting heart. Actually *I* have no idea of giving away money in this way. At one time she was *begging* of all the world, to serve *some* persons whom *she* knew, but whose *names* she thought proper to *withhold;* and she dressed the tale with much eloquence, and, I dare say, made a good collection: but these are ambiguities I do not understand—how do we *know* that *she appropriates* it as she *says?*"

"Good Heavens!" said Celia, with disdain, "could you dare to *suspect such* a

woman, Fanny?" and she burst into tears. "You cannot be *insensible* to the beauty of a character like Mrs. Welgrave's."

"Poh! Celia; this zeal for a stranger is ridiculous," said Lady Townly: "I believe she is a good sort of *woman*, but a very *inconvenient* acquaintance."

Celia was silent; there was so much wilful blindness in the manner of her sister—she so evidently *depreciated* the amiable Mrs. Welgrave, because her own blunted feelings made her incapable of taking *part* in her sentiments, that our heroine, almost hopeless of seeing the thoughtless Fanny reclaimed, sat mute and oppressed.

The Baronet entered—"I have just seen Mrs. Welgrave," said he; "she looks, if possible, more lovely than ever. Has she been here?"

Lady Townly replied.

"Is she not a charming woman?" said Sir Harry to Celia.

"Decidedly the most rational and amiable

able female I have met in my visit to London," replied our heroine.

"Were you to see her in her own house," said the Baronet, "it is there she is irresistible: young as she appears, her family are growing up around her, *guarded* by her tenderness, and *directed* by her judicious instruction: all her domestic enjoyments shew reflection—she descends to the most minute investigation of her household establishment; she is an admirable economist—without *meanness*, keeps regular *books* of her expenditures, and is, consequently, a good arithmetician. I am persuaded she has not a *care* but such as *sympathy* induces; and these must be short-lived, for her *charities* are ever flowing."

"What an eulogium!" said Lady Townly: "my dear Harry, if I was disposed to be jealous, this would certainly be the moment."

"I wish you were *emulous*," said the Baronet; "I should then be happy."

"Then

"Then I must go to school again," said her Ladyship; "for as to figures, I declare I *am* quite ignorant of them: and in regard to managing household affairs, you know I left aunt Martha when I was fourteen, and she never *could* bring me to attend Mrs. Wilkins, while pickling or preserving, nor yet to order a dinner: and of what use could such things have been to *me?* I should have *denied* my *knowledge* in these particulars long ere this; so my *ignorance* has *actually* saved my *veracity.*"

"But it has drawn *largely* on our *felicity*, Fanny," said the Baronet, thoughtfully.

Celia, unconsciously, added to the chagrin of her sister, by remarking, "that figures were not only an amusing *study*, but a reference highly conducive to *benevolence*. It is by the knowledge of our possessions that we may decide what we can with justice spare—we can calculate our *expences* and *contrast* our wants, thus gratifying our *feelings* and *reserving* our honour."

"The

"The remark is just," said Sir Harry; "and in the instance of Mrs. Welgrave, I remember to have heard, and that from undoubted authority, that she bore the sneers and whispers of the fashionable world for a whole *season*, by exhibiting a carriage of a very ancient make, rather than she would forego the delight of assisting a fellow-creature in distress."

"It was her attention to *expence* which induced this; and *what* must her husband feel on such an occasion?"

"Exactly what was proper," continued the Baronet; "for Welgrave is a man of sense, and *justly* proud of his treasure."

Celia declared she must be better ac quainted with this charming woman.

"*You* will find pleasure in her society," said Sir Harry; "she mixes occasionally in parties, but never makes herself conspicuous by giving *any* than social dinners. Happiness, to her, consists in domestic comfort, simple *content*. I never saw *her* name *blazoned* in any morning print, or heard

heard her fair fame tarnished, but by such as, wanting *sentiment* to *imitate* her, are ready to decry *that* to which they cannot *aspire*."

"Ten minutes, by my watch," said Lady Townly, laughing; "this must do for the present, Harry: now we will dress; 'and then to dinner, with what appetite ye may.'"

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

"Much had he read;
Much more had seen: He studied from the life,
And in the original perus'd mankind."

* * * * * * * *

"He pitied man: and much he pitied those
Whom falsely-smiling Fate has curs'd with means
To dissipate their days in quest of joy."

Lady Berton made her call in Portman-square. The fair hostess of the mansion was less disposed than ever to be cordial. She disliked the calm manners of the "starched moralist," as she always termed Lady Berton; and to this *repulsive* quality was now added the promised *visit* of our heroine.

Celia was surprised at the unwillingness with which her sister assented to her departure—"If I was so happy as to add to the

the comfort of one whom I love so much, if we agreed in sentiment, this *reluctance* would be most flattering."

But, sincere as our heroine was in every feeling of her heart, her *affection* could not blind her *discernment*.

The *presence* of Celia was a source of *liberty* to the thoughtless Lady Townly; for while the Baronet saw Celia and his child, the *absence* of his Lady was scarcely felt. Celia saw that apathy which was gaining on the *naturally* good mind of Sir Harry, with *real* alarm; and she trembled to think of the consequences which might ensue, when *no* restraint should be offered to the ever-erring and volatile Fanny—"I perceive it is not *my* society that she regrets," said Celia: "she dreads her *home*—its horrible *sameness*, as she calls it."

Our heroine ventured her opinion on the subject, ere she quitted Portman-square—"I believe you love me, Fanny," said the tearful Celia; "but I fear you love the *world* yet *better* than your sister."

"Cruel,

"Cruel, ungenerous girl!" said Lady Townly, "I did not expect this from you."

"Forgive me," said our heroine—"Let me ask of you a noble proof of your affection:—devote yourself to your husband—study the happiness of the best of men, whose only fault is his unlimited indulgence. With a man so fondly attached as he is, and a child, whose unfolding mind claims your tenderest vigilance, what can my sister possibly want, that Heaven has not given her?"

Lady Townly was sensibly affected—Nature asserted its right, and she had no power to reply for some minutes.

"I will see you every day," continued Celia—"Let me find you happy, and employed."

Her Ladyship *half* promised to consider the system; and our heroine, with her *emancipated* domestics, removed to Hanover-square.

If Celia owned an unfeigned pleasure in the rational home of Lady Berton, Patty and

and Richard's feelings amounted to transport. They could express their opinions, without fear of being laughed at; while the servants of Sir Peter, who had acquired a sort of *polish,* from their perodical residence in London, were qualified to define the many inexplicable assumptions of these *second-rate fashionables.*

Mr. Belford had been received with the esteem due to him. Lady Berton acknowledged in his friendship a very superior source of pleasure. Neither Sir Peter or his Lady appeared at ease—the continued absence of their son clouded their happiness. Celia had been two days in Hanover-square. She had just returned from Sir Harry's, and, in the warmth of her heart, had confided her hopes in the *stability* of her sister, by a simple relation of having found her at *home,* employed in teaching her daughter. The grateful perspective had called the tears into her eyes. Lady Berton had united in the sentiment, when a loud rap announced visitors. Celia arose in

haste,

haste, and drawing her veil over her face, hurried out of the room. In her way to her own apartment, she encountered a young and handsome man. He stopped, apparently to recognise and receive her salutation. She curtsied in silence. The stranger gazed. He saw her tears; and the dress she wore being *plain*, free from *ostentation*, he believed her to be an *applicant* of some sort. She turned from his oppressive scrutiny. The stranger bowed, and entered the drawing-room. Celia sought refuge in her own room. She had dismissed these traces of precious sorrow, and was unfolding her sanguine hopes in a long letter to Mrs. Mansfield, when Lady Berton asked admittance—"My dear Celia, said her Ladyship, "I am happy at last—George is come. He has fallen into an error of the most whimsical sort imaginable. He met *you* in the gallery, and had scarcely made his filial apologies, ere he asked, 'What could be the nature of *that* appeal to which *I* had replied with *austerity*?' I was at a loss to

understand him," continued her Ladyship, "till he declared, 'he had seen a very lovely young woman, evidently in trouble, issue from the drawing-room.' I entered into the mistake, and merely said, that 'I should *consider* of her claims to my esteem;' but *he* could not quit the subject, and was so curious to know what was the nature of your distress, that, in order to parry his inquiries, I was obliged to awaken his sensibility for *himself*, by reproving that tardiness which occasioned his father and myself so much real unquiet. He is always so contrite, and ready to admit reproof, that I believe I executed my part with a leniency perfectly well suited to his submission. He is gone in search of his father, but will join us at dinner. I am anticipating the pleasure of his surprise, when he meets, in the fair distressed, the companion of his youth."

Our heroine smiled at the mistake, and expressed much joy at the happy reunion of the little family.

Mr. Belford, who was of the dinner-party, arrived

arrived some time before. Not so the son and heir. The first course had gone out, when Mr. Berton was announced. The half-formed censure that the Baronet had suggested yielded to a smile, as he saw his son regarding our heroine with fixed attention. Lady Berton introduced Celia as her particular friend, taking care to pronounce her name in a low voice. It was evident that between Belford and Mr. Berton there was a coolness.

"What a ridiculous union that is which George has been witnessing!" said Lady Berton.

"It was highly amusing," said Mr. Berton—"in fact, the sacrifice, on Bridoon's part, had become indispensible."

"The woman's age," said Sir Peter, "deservedly ranks her as in her dotage; but how *any* man should feel it indispensible to act as a villain, I cannot conceive."

"A villain!" said George—"My dear father, you mistake my friend. He is gay

and volatile; but it was from a principle of *honour* that *he* married. I can assure you, that he has already *compromised* with numberless importunate creditors, who would, had he not taken this step, have thrown *him* into durance vile."

"What a cowardly subterfuge!" rejoined Sir Peter; "so to avoid a *temporary* evil, he has voluntarily committed himself with his *everlasting* Judge, *sworn* to protect a woman for whom he owns no *affection*, and with whom he will keep terms no longer than *her blindness* administers to *his* follies."

Mr. Berton was silent—he saw his father was serious; and whatever might be his private sentiments, he forbore to venture an opinion.

"*You* have seen Lady Bridoon?" said Mr. Belford, addressing Celia.

Our heroine replied in the affirmative.

"Do you know Mr. Bridoon, Madam?" asked Berton.

"I saw him once, Sir," said Celia.

"Is he not a very fine young man?" said Berton.

Celia, smiling, declared, "he did not appear so to her."

"It is Celia Delacour!" said George Berton, rising, and advancing to take the hand of our heroine.

The Baronet and his Lady laughed at the warmth of his manner. Mr. Belford looked grave, and, fixing his eyes on Celia, watched her features, as if to discover her thoughts.

"How did you make this discovery?" said Sir Peter.

"It was her smile," said George—"I had been thinking that I *had* seen her somewhere; but when she laughed, I was instantly informed.—How is Lady Townly?—though why should I ask? *she* is of too much importance in *society* not to be *distinguished*. I have *heard* of her almost *daily* since I left town."

"Indeed!" said Celia—"How?"

"The prints, my dear Madam—those faithful mirrors of superior beauty."

Celia smiled again; but it was by no means a smile of *acquiescence*.

"These *faithful* mirrors, George, appear to me the very *cosmetics* of fashion," said Sir Peter; "they daub a *character* with all the *superficial* aids that folly can devise, and then hold the portrait to view, with a *verbosity* that *their* colouring *alone* could make current."

"Ah! my dear Sir," said Mr. Berton, "believe me, time has reconciled us to the mode now in use. I will admit that it was at first offered *empirically*. Like every *new* style, it *took*; and *now*, a mere common-place *expression*, when applied to beauty, would appear *unintelligible*."

Lady Berton shook her head—"The system is bad," said she.

"Criminal, I fear," said Celia; "for is it not falsehood?"

"Undoubtedly," said Mr. Belford—"not only falsehood, but a *fraud* upon the under-

standings

standings of women. Yet, when I heard a lady gravely assert, the other day, that a *pretty* or a *pleasing* woman was a *creature* out of *date*, in the present enlightened era, that nothing but the *superlative* in beauty could hope to charm *now*, I instantly comprehended that a *false* worship must be acceptable—must, in fact, be the *incense* of the *hour*; for such *wonders* in nature are not general."

"What an avowal!" said Berton—"Does not every day illustrate, that *perfect* beauty is given to our view?" And he glanced at Celia, with an expression of approval.

"*Your* reference is correct," said Belford, "in a great degree, because Miss Delacour's *share* of beauty is *natural*. In this point, she has the advantage over thousands."

"What a provisional compliment!" said Mr. Berton, smiling.

"It is the candour of an honest man," said Sir Peter. "My little friend Celia is by

by no means so handsome as her sister. Lady Townly, in her *natural* person, was the most beautiful girl I ever saw. She is *now* a very fine woman; but not a Celia Delacour."

Even Mr. Berton, if *looks* could be accurately translated, seemed to agree in the sentiments of his father.

Lady Berton and Celia withdrew. They had not been many minutes in the drawing-room before Mrs. Welgrave was announced. Our heroine and this lady appeared mutually pleased by the meeting. Lady Berton declared herself happy to find them known to each other. The gentlemen soon joined them. Mr. Berton took infinite pleasure in reverting to their childish friendship and pursuits. He reminded Celia of their hay-making at Hadley, of their forfeits at Christmas, and their birth-day galas.

Mr. Belford owned a pang, exquisitely painful, during this familiar, yet natural reference to times past.

"Have

"Have you accomplished your purpose?" said Lady Berton, addressing Mrs. Welgrave.

"Not exactly," said this amiable woman; "I have two or three more, whom I mean to attack to-morrow."

Celia comprehended to what they alluded; and, in a low voice, asked if *she* might not be further useful?

"I will not consent to it yet," said Mrs. Welgrave—"Will you accompany me in my calls in the morning? I think I can promise you some amusement."

Celia accepted the invitation; and, smiling at Mr. Belford, she made him comprehend that his *sorrow* had as yet been the climax of her entertainment.

"How kind of Mrs. Mansfield to spare you to my mother!" said Mr. Berton.

Celia explained.

"Then you leave us soon?" said he, with a voice in which regret was visible.

"In a few days," said Celia.

"But we shall see you often, my love," said

said Lady Berton; "and your sister has promised to look in upon us."

"I have unfortunately offended Sir Harry," said George. "He has not left his card at my chambers these three months. I shall certainly wave etiquette, and venture to show myself in Portman-square *once* more."

"I regret you should have lost the esteem of Townly," said Sir Peter; "he is an amiable young man."

The ladies and Mr. Belford were unanimous in their praises of the Baronet; but Celia felt her sensibility wounded, when not a word was said of her sister. To her untutored heart, the pair *linked* in the holy band were as *one*, and it seemed the most natural thing in the world, when speaking of one, to *blend* the social order.—"If *I am* in search of a husband," thought Celia, "what a phantom am I seeking!—a creature whose confidence should be my *pride*, whose love my *honour*; qualified to be my *guardian*, yet *humbled* to the *tempered* fan-

cies

cies of my *affection*—*faithful* to my *devoted* heart,

> 'His constant lamp,'

shall cheer my *temporal* sorrows; and, while I *loved* as a *woman*, teach me to be *grateful* as a Christian."

From a reverie somewhat enthusiastic, (as our readers will no doubt perceive), Miss Delacour was roused by the words of Mr. Belford—"Yes, I am the *manager* in this interesting *entré*," said he; "I only elucidate existing facts and *items*, of which Miss Delacour is uninformed, offer a few remarks or *cues*, and then leave her to her own *discernment*—But there *are those* who say she is 'in search of a husband.'"

Celia blushed, and declared Mr. Belford was exceeding his commission.

"Celia," said Sir Peter, "suppose, by way of *flattering* the many who take pleasure in *thinking for* us, suppose you *admit* the assertion—Have you as *yet* seen a man whom you would *dignify* by the appellation?"

"Never,"

"Never," said Celia, in the warmth of her heart.

Now, if our heroine had *studied*, from all that has been *said* or *written* on the beauty of candour, she could not have *conceived* so *depressing* and hopeless a reply. It fell on the heart of Belford like the *fiat* of Fate; for she was not a woman to *speak* but from true feeling.

"Yet you have seen Mr. Danbury," said Mrs. Welgrave, smiling.

"He is a *beau*," said Celia, smiling.

"And Bridoon was——" said Belford, with a *forced* smile.

"A mere *jockey*," said our heroine.

"Lord Ernmore——" continued Belford.

"A good *musician*," replied Celia.

"Mr. Berton——" said Belford, looking archly.

"He *was* a very good boy," said Celia.

"Proceed," said Lady Berton, with an impressive smile—"Celia, be candid."

Celia hesitated.

Sir

Sir Peter took the hand of our heroine —"No evasion, Celia," said he.

"He appears a very *fashionable* man," said Celia.

"Excellent!" said the Baronet—"a just, a conclusive satire!"

Mr. Berton bowed to her decision, which he could not attempt to refute—"But I will do more," said he—"Condescend, my dear Miss Delacour, to new-model me; I am plastic in the hands of Beauty; I will submit myself to your guidance."

Celia declared herself a novice, yet under tuition, and wholly unsuited to the charge.

"Do you go on with your embellishments at Highgate?" asked Mr. Belford.

"No——yes," replied Berton, somewhat confused.

"Have you a villa?" said the Baronet.

George explained, that, as a relaxation from study, he had fitted up a box at Highgate, to which he retired occasionally.

"It is judicious," said Sir Peter; "I applaud your retiring from this voluptuous town.

town. Every hour that you draw *from* its intoxicating sphere, is an hour gained."

Mr. Belford looked as though he believed *vice* was of no *peculiar* soil—as though the *man*, and not the *place*, characterised the *hydra-headed monster*.

"We will surprise you some morning," said Lady Berton to her son.

"Not yet, my dear Madam," said Mr. Berton; "I will apprise you when it is fit to be so honoured." And his eye glanced towards Belford, while his cheek was crimsoned, and his manner embarrassed.

Mrs. Welgrave and Celia had taken their netting; Lady Berton was employed in working an urn mat.

"I have never seen three ladies thus engaged since I left Berton-Hall," said George.

"You do not visit a domestic circle," replied his mother.

"*Where* would he find one?" said Mr. Belford. "I, who have known London some years longer than Mr. Berton, was contemplating

contemplating the *present* as a scene for which my *memory* finds no likeness."

"Yet I must support the ladies in this particular," said Mr. Berton; "they are indefatigable in acquiring *every* new introduction that is imported."

"Is that from a principle of *industry*, a wish to *employ* time?" said Mr. Belford; "or is it not merely because they *are new?*"

"I am not disposed to *censure* or *analyze* the feelings of our imperious enslavers," said Berton; "it is sufficient for me that their *varieties* are always pleasing—in fact, I am *amused* by their fancies."

"If *you* are the *slave* of such," said Mr. Belford, "if you depreciate creatures who *naturally* rank *high* in the scale of reason, by *assenting* to their follies, you are censurable."

"Certainly," said Sir Peter; "but, as Miss Delacour has observed, George, you are really a very *fashionable* man."

Mr. Berton *now* disowned the distinction, but

but with too much of the *assumption* to eradicate the impression.

"Do you visit the Desmonds?" asked Mr. Belford of Mrs. Welgrave.

"I sometimes leave my card in St. James's-square," said Mrs. Welgrave.

"They are charming girls," said George Berton, "and highly domestic—they make their own *shoes*."

"They are admirable *cobblers*," said Belford, "to the utter destruction of the pining mechanic, who *starves* in his *garret*; while ladies of *fashion*, by their bungling *attempts*, *spoil* their *fingers*, and make themselves justly the objects of ridicule."

"I must agree with you, Sir," replied Mrs. Welgrave; "the *art*, in itself, is by no means a necessary acquirement; and as *grace* and *attitude* are amongst the attractions of the day, I rather wonder that *vanity* has not long since induced them to *discard* the trade."

"Nor can its *knowledge* be called a *domestic* quality," said Lady Berton; "but I perceive

perceive that the *real attributes* of such a character are *misnomers*, in the present acceptation of the word."

"You are right," said Mr. Belford; "I know a very unassuming and amiable woman, who has lost all claim to *fashionable* suffrage, by having been *discovered* in the *act* of carrying a *bason of broth* to an invalid *friend*, a *relation*—'It was *derogatory* to a *gentlewoman*;' yet the very same people will descend to become the *companions* of a *shoemaker*, to learn an art wholly insignificant, and in which they can be excelled by the most illiterate *professor*."

Celia blushed—She comprehended to whom he alluded.

"And might not the *fair* ambassador from the kitchen be equally liable to a humiliation of this sort?" asked Berton;—"could not she be outdone by the *cook*, or even the *kitchen-maid*?"

"In the point of *making* it, perhaps she *might*," replied Belford; "but in the simple

 beauty

beauty of the act, in *administering* it, could she ever appear more amiable, than when studious to alleviate the anguish of the body, by gracing her *duties* with all the charms of *mind?*"

"You ever throw in a dash of this sort," retorted Berton; "after exalting the deed to its climax, you yet term it a *duty*."

"A *common* duty—one that *reason* and *nature* commands," rejoined Belford: "but *reason rarely* dignifies the women of this day, and *nature* is out of *countenance*."

"I should like to see this *rara avis*, this *reasonable, natural, culinary* damsel," said Berton.

"Use your eyes, George; she is *present*," said Mr. Belford.

"Celia," said Mr. Berton, arresting the hand of our heroine, "is it possible!"

Celia, smiling, declared Mr. Berton would spoil her netting; while the deep blushes that dyed her cheeks were the cause of alarm to Belford. He attributed them to a tender embarrassment, which the very fine exterior

exterior of Mr. Berton was eminently calculated to inspire. He dishonoured the feelings of our heroine by such a conclusion; yet we believe the mistake is not unusual with an attached heart. The blushes of Celia were excited by two causes—the unqualified praises of Belford, and the irony of George Berton.

"Miss Delacour has had the happiness to be educated under the eye of the most *excellent* and judicious of women," said Sir Peter; "she has been taught to feel her own importance in society; that no *superficial* acquirements are essential in themselves; while the discharge of her moral duties have been so well directed, as to have made her principal happiness to consist in their performance.—It is your advantage, my child," continued Sir Peter, "to be of that sex which happily arrives at maturity ere the good impressions are effaced by an intercourse with the world. *I* believe woman to be capable of all that is *exalted,* all that is praiseworthy; but I at the same time

believe that their *stable* happiness is only to be found in retirement. At nineteen years of age, I may with truth aver, that Lydia and myself saw in our son all the promise we could *wish*, in his *manliness*, *integrity*, and *correct moral* conduct. The *world* has since interfered—I *trust* not *irreparably*; but you are indeed too *fashionable* a man to wear the approbation of your father, my dear George."

Mr. Berton was by no means prepared for a lecture so serious.

Lady Berton removed her spectacles, and, while she hid the tears that would force down her cheek, she mildly remarked, "that she believed her son more a *victim* than a *convert* to fashion."

"In either case, he proves his weakness," said the Baronet.

"George's career is not of the date you imagine," said Mr. Belford: "I avow, that at four-and-twenty, he was a pattern for thousands of his age. His follies are not of *two* years growth," continued Belford,

extending

extending his hand to the son of his friend. "And I have the vanity to add, that when he ceased to believe *me* his friend, he did *himself* the greatest injustice. I will not say *how* much he wounded my feelings."

"From this moment, my dear Belford," said the subdued Berton, "let me entreat of you to forget the past: from this moment, consider me *proud* and *willing* to be directed by your judgment."

The reconciliation was ratified by *tears*, for the ladies unanimously accorded the tender meed.

There have been many vague attempts made by certain *independent* minds, wearing the form of *woman*, to contend against the idea of *man's* superiority. It were almost a libel to say—that is, if *truth* is a libel—that such women must want *feminine* souls; for surely, to a delicate mind, there is an immensity of comfort in looking up to the creature of your love, not only as the treasure of your heart, but the *guide* of your life.

life. As Milton has beautifully expressed it, women may claim

> ———————" thy honouring and thy love;
> Not thy subjection. Weigh with her thyself,
> Then value:—ofttimes nothing profits more
> Than self esteem, grounded on just and right
> Well managed."

To minds thus attuned—women who look upon the other sex with an *aspiring* tenderness—to such women, there can be no stronger *appeal* to their feelings, than beholding a *man* in *sorrow*.

A female *author* is *supposed* to be *romantic;* yet in *this* it is very possible to be *mistaken;* but the *woman* who writes these pages acknowledges, *unsolicited,* that the *record* of a *noble deed,* the daring of a *generous mind,* would be more likely to awaken her sensibility, than all the *whinings* of *sentiment*. With such disposition, it is no wonder she gave *tears* to the *woman* whom she meant to exalt, or that *she* should

think

think the *contrition* of George Berton (as a superior being, because a *man*) was *worthy* of a boon so precious.

"I do not apologize," said Sir Peter to his son, "for having awakened your feelings in the presence of *this* circle. You must appreciate *such* friends, my dear George. Their *esteem* is of value to you."

Mr. Berton declared himself with candour; and, as the amiable Belford arose to retire, George made his adieus; and, promising to breakfast with his parents next morning, withdrew with his friend.

Mrs. Welgrave was eloquent, though sincere, in illustrating many amiable traits of character which actually graced the nature of Mr. Berton—"Yet I have for some time considered him in danger of falling from his natural bias. Your arrival, my dear friends, and a little *perspective*, which my vanity induces me to believe we shall *all* take delight in viewing, makes me sanguine enough to add, that George will prove all you could wish him."

Sir Peter and his Lady admitted the hope; while Celia, the fair destiny of their maternal bosoms, retired, with a painful conviction that the *world* was a more powerful tyrant than *she* had believed it, since it had transformed an amiable and moral young man, accustomed to contemplate virtue with profound reverence, to the mere flutterer of the day—*a man of fashion*.

CHAP. XI.

"Of all the fools that pride can boast,
A coxcomb claims distinction most;
Coxcombs are of all ranks and kind,
They're not to sex or age confin'd.
* * * * * * * * * *
Their *own* false balance gives them weight,
But every *other* finds 'em light."

Mr. Berton was punctual to his appointment next morning; Celia observed, with unfeigned pleasure, that he could be rational and unaffected. The Baronet and his Lady were gratified by his attention, though they justly attributed it, in *part*, to the presence of their fair visitor.

George seized the moment of our heroine's morning walk to Portman-square, to offer himself as her attendant. Celia assented; and, in introducing him to Sir Harry,

Harry, effected a more perfect cordiality between the gentlemen, than *cards* could have negotiated in an *age of fashion*.

Again Celia found her sister *employed*; she expressed the delight she owned by smiles, perfectly intelligible to Lady Townly.

"Now, mama, I may wear my gold chain," said Rachel, as she closed the book she had been reading.

Lady Townly bade her daughter ring the nursery bell, and desire Martin to bring her necklace.

Celia caught the hand of Rachel—"I want to talk with you, Rachel," said our heroine.

The child took her seat on the knee of Celia—she questioned her as to what she had been reading.

"Not a picture book," said the little fairy; "but it was very pretty, all about God, and light, and herbs—so now I may have my best necklace."

"No, Rachel," said our heroine; "go, ask

ask your papa, if he does not think his little girl is growing wise? ask him if he is pleased with you?"

Rachel fled to her father—the Baronet comprehended the motive of Celia, and, in the most affectionate terms, expressed his approbation.

Rachel, however, could not forget her necklace, and returning to Celia, asked if she might not now ring the bell?

"Look at me," said our heroine; "I have read *my* lessons this morning, and Lady Berton said I was a good girl, but I did not put on *any* necklace."

Rachel was quiescent; and Celia promising to bring her a book on the next morning, the little prattler forgot her pride, and thought wholly of the morrow.

"Celia, I am counting the hours till your return," said Lady Townly.

Mr. Berton declared he never, till that moment, had felt disposed to offer an opinion in opposition to her Ladyship.

Sir Harry, smiling, observed, "that, in

the

the present case, his gallantry wore a character not usual—that of truth; for who," continued he, "that ever had the society of Celia, did not languish for her return? and who, that is blessed by her presence, but felt jealous of resigning her?"

Mr. Berton bowed to the justice of the remark.

Lady Townly was willing to admit her sister's claims to general esteem, yet added, with a laugh, "that no stronger proof of her excellence could be adduced, than that it elicited a compliment from Townly."

"Not a compliment, Fanny," said Sir Harry; "Celia knows me too well, to believe me insincere."

"Yet your praise is very high coloured, my dear Harry," said our heroine; "but Mr. Berton will make allowances for your partiality."

Lady Cardonnel was announced.

"Ah! my dear Cinderella," said her Ladyship, advancing to Celia—when, re-

cognising

cognising Mr. Berton, she declared herself delighted at the rencontre.

"You are just returned from Snowdon Hall—Poor Bridoon! how does he wear his chains?"

Mr. Berton was whimsically satirical; and Celia perceived with concern, all that calm rational manner, which he had so recently assumed, not only yielded to the taste of his companion, but his language was at once affected and ridiculous.

Lady Townly took part in the fashionable conversation; and Mr. Berton perfectly contradicted his assertion of the preceding day "that his friend's match was a prudential one." On the contrary, he *now* pronounced it a barbarous sacrifice, and lamented, with an indirect glance at the expecting fair, "that some men wanted souls—for his part, he execrated the being who consigned himself to such an unnatural bondage."

"This conduct," thought Celia, "may bear a very *lenient* term, in a *certain* society;

ciety; but to me, it is palpable duplicity."

Sir Harry drew Celia on one side—"Do you like Berton's character?" said he.

"I cannot understand it," said our heroine.

"It is an odd compound," said the Baronet. "He has much natural feeling, but he wants strength to combat the assumption of follies which his reason must condemn."

"How weak!" said Celia.

"I hope you have not been annoyed as I have been," said Lady Cardonnel. "Mrs. Welgrave has been attacking me on the old score, *charity*; but I was determined to resist her—for if once we give in, her demands are *unconscionable*."

"I was in a manner compelled," said Lady Townly; "for my sister being a stranger to her extraordinary propensity, was duped into a contribution, and I had not courage to explain the fact in her presence."

"Pardon

"Pardon me, Fanny," said our heroine, "I then acted from the impulse of the moment, excited by the unaffected eloquence of that most amiable woman; her character has since risen in my esteem; and I am persuaded you are only using a *fashionable* licence, when you deny her power over you—nay, I should be sensibly wounded, if I believed that the sister I loved did not value such a woman as she deserves."

Sir Harry entered at large into the sentiments of Celia—even Mr. Berton joined in her eulogium.

Lady Cardonnel laughed at all their attempts, which, she declared, should never bring her to agree that any woman had a right to draw upon the purses of her acquaintance, merely because *she* had a happy way of making up a piteous story."

"Though you should deny the power of a *mortal* in such a case," said Celia, "has not *charity* been enjoined? have

you

you not been warned, not to turn from a *brother* or *sister* in need?"

"Oh yes, I believe I recollect something of the kind," said her Ladyship; "but it is far better we should be left to our own *spontaneous* acts, than be trepanned into dilemma's for which we are not prepared."

"All preparation must deduce from the purity of our sympathy," said Celia; "for, though it is our duty to seek into the worth of the object, the creature may perish, while we hesitate on the most convenient way of affording assistance; and though our charity should be misplaced, the *intention* will *exonerate* the error."

"Positively you are a most eccentric girl," said Lady Cardonnel; "but the *country* should be your sphere."

"There is a wide field for benevolence in this metropolis," said the Baronet; "thousands pine in secret; numbers are compelled to solicit aid—but when I see

a young

a young lovely woman, like Mrs. Welgrave, disseminating her charities so liberally, and that from a fortune by no means affluent, I am disgusted with the thoughtless profusion that dishonours the higher circles."

"I must leave you," said Celia, rising; "I have an engagement at two."

Sir Harry, joining our heroine and Mr. Berton, accompanied them to Hanover-square. The arrival of Mrs. Welgrave drew Celia away—Mr. Berton saw her depart with regret.

"There are few men who possess so fine an exterior as Berton," said Mrs. Welgrave, as the carriage drew off.

Celia agreed in thinking him a very handsome man.

"His manners are persuasive," continued Mrs. Welgrave.

"He can be agreeable," said Celia.

"My dear Miss Delacour," rejoined Mrs. Welgrave, "your mind is admirably

attuned to meet the fallacious semblances of the world; you will never yield your heart, where your *reason* would *blush* for your preference—in fact, you will either be a most happy, or a greatly deceived wife."

"I am almost tempted to believe that I shall not marry," said Celia; "yet my disposition is suited to domestic life; and, like all enthusiasts, I have frequently drawn an ideal home."

"Then you have distinguished an object?" said Mrs. Welgrave, smiling.

"No—that is, I *once* regarded a being, whom I thought amiable; our acquaintance was transient—fate led him to a distance—he died, and since that period, I have not met his equal—for the men appear to me ashamed of being thought *moral*, as if the practice of religion was an austere system, inimical to *youth* and *health*—alas! if it is only taken up from *fear*, resorted to in *danger*, its adoption is a

puerile

puerile resemblance of what it should be, and scarcely an acceptable offering to the God who ordained it."

"These sentiments are perfectly consistent with the idea I had formed of your character," said Mrs. Welgrave. "I know but one man worthy of you, and he is a wretched, disappointed—nay, a *dishonoured* husband. But so it is, my fair friend; marriages are so hastily and injudiciously concluded, that the torch of Hymen expires in a few months; indifference, if not hatred, succeeds—and the only sympathy of sentiment they evince, is the mutual immorality into which they plunge, in order to dissolve the mistaken union."

The carriage stopped; Mrs. Welgrave and our heroine were ushered into the drawing-room of Lady Visapoor.

"Ah, my dear Welgrave!" said her Ladyship, "this is very kind—Miss Delacour, I am really excessively glad to see you."

Celia was surprised; *she* did not recollect ever having seen her Ladyship.

"You were immensely cruel the other evening at Cardonnel's, to run away, just as Danbury had been raising my curiosity to the utmost degree."

Celia believed Mr. Danbury had a very lively invention.

"He is an admirable judge of beauty," said her Ladyship with an approving smile.

Our heroine blushed most profusely—A servant entered, and announced "Mr. Topaz, the jeweller."

"Will you permit me to see him?" asked her Ladyship, with obliging humility.

Mrs. Welgrave and Celia instantly assented, and the jeweller was shown in.

"Tell Fanchon to bring my jewel-box," said Lady Visapoor.

Fanchon presented the valuable casket, and her Ladyship proceeded to comment on the beauty of her *diamonds* and *pearls*.

Mr.

Mr. Topaz declared them to be a fine collection—"Their *setting*, to be sure, was not exactly modern—but if her Ladyship would permit *him* to *new* set them, he would engage to make them *superior* to any in the kingdom—not excepting Mrs. Clanfield, who has her *dress* and her *undress* diamonds."

"I am *afraid* to trust them in your hands," said Lady Visapoor, with a condescending smile.

"I know there are *some* tricks in the trade, my Lady," replied Topaz; "but you may rely upon *my honour*."

"Well, what must I give you to modernize these?" and she placed a pearl crescent, and a diamond bandeau, in the hands of the jeweller.

"Somewhere about seventy pounds—from *that* to a hundred, my Lady."

"Well, take them," said her Ladyship; "that sum won't ruin me."

Topaz retired.

Mrs. Welgrave and Celia took a view

 of

of the interior of the casket—"Did you ever calculate the *interest* upon these?" said Mrs. Welgrave.

"What an idea!" said her Ladyship; "actually, if I did not *know* your *connexions*, I should take you for some tradesman's daughter, who could not forget the shop."

"I might be a very respectable member of society, even owning such origin—but, as I perceive *you* are indifferent to expence," replied Mrs. Welgrave, "I wish you would add your name to this," and she presented the few names that she had attained, for her inspection, relating the case with her usual sweetness.

"I am really *very* sorry," said Lady Visapoor; "but I have been at *great* expence lately," and she returned the paper. "I feel much *reluctance* in refusing *you*; but *this* is the *season* when one is *naturally* led into *unavoidable* expences: you may perceive I have been getting *lamps* and *novelties* to decorate my rooms," and she directed

directed the ladies to observe these superfluous appendages of modern taste.

"The *mind* of this *woman* wants *light*," thought Celia, as she turned from the brilliant chandelier to the callous possessor of it.

Mrs. Welgrave and our heroine retired, her Ladyship following them with her regrets that it should have occurred just at *this* time.

"What do you think of this woman?" asked Mrs. Welgrave.

Celia declared, that such *professions* were *criminal*.

"You are right," said Mrs. Welgrave; "I did not *expect* to succeed in any *material* degree; but one would scarcely have imagined, that she could *wholly* have refused her assistance, and be guilty of such a *palpable* folly in our presence—the *world* has been so censorious as to say, that her Ladyship's fortune (which is an Asiatic one) was made most *rapidly*; and her

diamonds, in *particular*, are named as rank bribes."

"At all events," said Celia, "her acquiescence would have graced her nature, though I fear it could not *redeem* her jewels—if such is the right by which she holds them."

Again they were received at a noble mansion—Mrs. Bruton was environed by cards, some written, others blank—"Excuse me, my *dear* friend," said Mrs. Bruton, as she squeezed the fingers of Mrs. Welgrave; "I will dispatch these in a moment — elucidate to your charming friend the variety and press of *my* avocations—tell her what an idle creature Bruton is—how he leaves me to wade through all this fatigue, and laughs at me, when my *nerves* are shattered almost to *annihilation*."

"You have left me nothing to say," replied Mrs. Welgrave, laughing; "Miss Delacour will understand that you have a bad husband."

Mrs.

Mrs. Bruton declared "Mrs. Welgrave was very saucy.—I have a great mind not to send Lady Townly a card," said Mrs. Bruton, pausing; "she is getting very stingy—quite *shabby*—not one party this season."

Had not Mrs. Bruton's eyes been directed towards Mrs. Welgrave, she must have discovered, by the confusion of Celia, that she was in an error.

Mrs. Welgrave smiled.

"Yes, I will send her one," continued she; "for I know it will vex Sir Harry—I owe him a little pique;" and she penned a card, with as much *adroitness* as *duplicity*, requesting the *honour* of their company to dinner, &c.

The cheeks of our heroine were suffused with blushes of honest indignation.

Mrs. Welgrave, by a look, repressed the reply that seemed to be hovering on her lips.

Mrs. Bruton finished her cards, and, touching the bell, ran into a very copious

appro-

approbation of Lady Cardonnel's taste—"Her rooms are unique, and her music ravishing; but, poor Car! she is fond of *showing* off—I really believe it may be attributed to *chagrin* just now—Bridoon's marriage is a terrible *cut* to her vanity.—Deliver these tickets," said Mrs. Bruton to the servant, who waited her orders; "and call at Lady Querelle's, with my best love, and beg to know how she is?—And call at Mrs. Moreton's, and enquire after the children."

The man withdrew.

"What an odious creature Querelle is!" said Mrs. Bruton; "the sooner *she* is off the stage the better.—And as to Moreton, her house is a perfect *hospital;* while her children, who sicken one with their rudely healthful looks, appear more likely to die of repletion, than any thing else."

Celia was disgusted by the *hypocrisy* of Mrs. Bruton—but let it be remembered, *she* was an almost *stranger* to *fashionable* life.

"You

"You have heard of Lady ——— elopement?" continued the breathless voluble. "She is much to be pitied—there was something vastly *interesting* in her taking leave of her children."

"It was a *refinement* in sin," said Mrs. Welgrave; "though, I believe, the deception is very generally understood."

"What! you do not believe that she regretted to leave her children?" returned Mrs. Bruton.

"Good Heavens!" said the gentle mother, "can any one believe, that a woman who was rushing from the protection of an honourable husband, to the arms of a libertine, could own one tender or becoming feeling?—No, no; believe her what she is—an infatuated shameless wife; and if such a wife can be a mother, every other incongruity in *nature* may blend."

"This is not like your usual charity," said Mrs. Bruton; "I remember to have seen *you* very active for a '*fallen sister*,' as

you

you termed her, though not a *married* woman."

"Certainly," said Mrs. Welgrave, "*that* was her *claim* to my poor services; *she* might be *deceived*, but a *married* woman has *no such* plea."

"Well, I cannot comprehend the grounds on which you draw this line," said Mrs. Bruton.

Celia thought this very possible, for Mrs. Bruton was a coarse, unfeeling woman, and her fair antagonist the mild emblem of virtuous sensibility.

"Will you look at this?" said Mrs. Welgrave, and she placed her charitable scroll in the hands of Mrs. Bruton, again repeating her pathetic story.

"Did Lady Townly *really* contribute *her* mite?" said the sarcastic hostess.

"Certainly," said Mrs. Welgrave; "Lady Townly is very capable of a benevolent deed."

"I cannot reach her *just* now," said Mrs. Bruton, "for I have been forced to

engage

engage ——— to sing at my concert on the 16th; and *that* has drained my purse—he will not make a *cadence* under *ten guineas;* and I have been paying my subscription to the *Argyle Rooms*, and the *Royal Institution*, so that I am very *poor*, as you may suppose—at any *future* time, I shall be most *happy* to meet *your* wishes."

Mrs. Welgrave, smiling, received her unsuccessful scroll.

A servant entered—" Mr. Hookham has promised an opera box, Madam."

" Very good; I am greatly obliged," said Mrs. Bruton. " Here, Jones, go pay for it," and she drew her purse and gave the money to the man. " You have heard Catalani, I suppose?"

Celia replied in the negative.

" She is exquisite! oh you must go—shall I have the pleasure of taking you this evening?"

Celia declined the honour—she was engaged.

" Wel-

"Welgrave, will you *take* two seats?"

"I am too *poor* in *taste*," said Mrs. Welgrave, "to *pay* for opera tickets just *now*," and, with a smile that appeared to discomfort Mrs. Bruton, she arose.

"Is Miss Delacour residing with you?" asked Mrs. Bruton; "I must solicit the honour of her company for the 16th."

"Miss Delacour is with Lady Berton at present," replied Mrs. Welgrave; "her *home*, while in London, is with her *sister*, Lady Townly."

"*Mon Dieu!* Pardon me, my dear young lady, I had not the least idea you were a *connexion* of her Ladyship's—it is the most unfortunate thing in the world to have a *warm heart*—I say a thousand things without *thought*; and Lady Townly *has* been so long considered as a *meteor* in a *certain* circle, that the least *diminution* of her wonted *lustre* awakens surprise and regret."

"And *censure* too," said Celia, mildly. "That she has *ever* been so *distinguished*,

is

is her misfortune; I trust she will in *future* concentrate her rays, and be *content* to *shine* at *home*."

"I should deeply lament a rescission, so prejudicial to the *happiness* of her numerous *friends*," said Mrs. Bruton, with a smile of *systematic* hypocrisy; "and *now* that such a *planet* is added to her *train*, it would be absolutely *cruel*."

Celia neither regarded the *compliment* or the *speaker*; and in a few minutes after retired.

"These are the *deceptions* of fashionable life," said Mrs. Welgrave, as she ordered the carriage to Lady Sarburton's.

"The *deceived* are the culpable party," said our heroine; "what she has said of my sister, is really matter of comfort to *me*; but how any person can sacrifice their time to such *palpable* impostors, is astonishing."

"They support each other," said Mrs. Welgrave; "and while they *contribute* to the

the intoxicating *round,* nothing can be more *attached* than they *appear* to be; the *least* omission, however, is *discovered;* their *taste* totters, they become *parsimonious—shabby;* and, at *last,* their *dear* friends *cut.* Yet, in the very *zenith* of their *rivalité,* the most contemptible *jealousies* are visible—I have known a lady of rank offer a sort of *bounty* to her *confectioner, green-grocer, &c. &c.* in order to make *her* gala *superior* to that of her *preceding cotemporary.*"

"Can any thing be more *unworthy* of emulation, than this waste of health and money?" said Celia: "to *hear* those *degrading* and *callous* excuses, which have been offered to *you,* as apologies for their *inability* to meet your request, is really dreadful; nay, they misconceive the *nature* of your appeal, and *actually* seem to *think* that *you* are the obliged person, as if common *humanity,* that *claim* which the *unhappy* have on *all* who possess *power,* was not equally applicable from the king

to

to the peasant—it must be the effect of education"—might she not have added—

" ———— studious they appear
Of arts that polish life, inventors rare,
Unmindful of their Maker, though His spirit
Taught them, but they His gifts acknowledged none.
* * * * * * * * * *
For that fair female troop thou saw'st, that seem'd
Of goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay;
Yet empty of all good wherein consists
Woman's domestic honour and chief praise;
Bred only and completed to the taste
———— to sing, to dance,
To dress ————"

"The awful derelictions in domestic life, so prevalent at *this* period," replied Mrs. Welgrave, "must have some weight with the rising generation; at least, the fallacy of all that has been done, by way of *refinement* and *accomplishments*, will awaken *reflection* in the bosoms of *parents*: it is the want of *companionable* qualities, *moral* resources, that has classed *English-*

 women

women with the voluptuous inhabitants of other climes. When music, dancing, and French, are the *whole* of a child's *studies*; when, to *each* of these, a *considerable* portion of the *day* is devoted; when not one *moral* obligation is enforced, or a *divine* truth illustrated, the creature grows into woman, with no other idea than to *attract* —at sixteen she *dances* a *pas seul,* with *habitual* confidence—*languishes* an Italian air, with a manner offensive to *delicacy*— and either closes her career, by a blushless *apathy* to opinions, or casts the *doubtful* semblance aside, and stands confest a *convert* to the *Rights of Woman.*"

Celia listened to her judicious friend, with that deference that her judgment ever demanded, and mentally she rejoiced, that *she* had been reared upon principles so distinct.

"You will witness an extraordinary system of education where we are going," said Mrs. Welgrave, "if her Ladyship is at home."

The

The carriage stopped—Lady Sarburton *was* at home, and the ladies were admitted. Her Ladyship was plainly, though elegantly attired; her manners were mild and prepossessing—"You are greatly like your sister," said her Ladyship, addressing Celia; "I remember Miss Delacour, when she *first* made her *entré*, as a most lovely young woman."

Celia, smiling, declared—"That *she* had never been considered to resemble her sister."

"Yes, there is a certain cast of countenance, an expression perfectly similar," said her Ladyship; "yet there is more of *sensibility* in your *contour*—Lady Townly's is a *speaking* vivacity—a face that says a thousand lively things without speaking—*your's* seems to *ask* acquaintance; will you admit *me* of the *select cotérie?*"

There was something irresistible, though *eccentric*, in the manner of Lady Sarburton, yet Celia felt disposed to acquiesce—"Your Ladyship does me honour," said

our heroine, as she admitted her election to her favour.

"I am a pupil of Lavater's," said Lady Sarburton, "and never yet found my decisions erroneous."

Celia thought the study *dangerous*, calculated to establish prejudices.

"Not at all; believe me, I am most *grateful* that such a *perfect* mirror of human nature is given to our view; it will eventually prove of *infinite* utility to *me*," and she sighed.

Celia looked her surprise.

"Are all the young people well?" asked Mrs. Welgrave.

"In high health," said her Ladyship.

A servant entered—"The dinner is going in, my Lady," said the man.

"I will attend *immediately*," said her Ladyship, rising. "Will you see the girls?" said Lady Sarburton.

Mrs. Welgrave expressed her wish to do so. Our heroine, invited by her Ladyship, followed into an inner apartment, where

where a Frenchwoman, the governess of the children, was waiting with her pupils. A large pair of wooden scales were suspended from the ceiling, into which one of the children stepped; a man-servant placed the weights.

"Miss Louisa *six* ounces," said her Ladyship. A *second* ascended the emblem of justice—"Four ounces and a *half*," said the tutelary goddess, examining the weights. "Now, Charlotte," said her Ladyship. The little girl stepped lightly into the scale, evidently contracting her muscles, in order to diminish her weight—"Five ounces and a half!" said the astonished mother. "What a cormorant you are, Charlotte! Let me beg of you, Ma'amselle, to be vigilant with Charlotte, or she will be hideously gross."

Ma'amselle promised to attend to her orders, and the children rushed out of the room.

Celia owned some curiosity with respect to the scene she had witnessed—Mrs. Wel-

grave saw her feelings—"My friend Lady Sarburton is an enemy to indulgence in food," said Mrs. Welgrave, addressing our heroine; "and she uses the method we have just seen exhibited, in order to ascertain what quantity she thinks will suffice for the meal that is to follow."

Celia was silent.

"I am persuaded, that there is nothing more prejudicial to the *health* and *intellects* of children, than *full* feeding," said her Ladyship; "nay, I attribute the superior *literary* excellence of my own *countrymen* (her Ladyship was a native of Scotland), to that *abstemiousness* so *generally* prevalent in their early days."

Celia thought *excess* must be *injurious*, but imagined *limitation* equally *dangerous*.

"You did not remark the girls," said her Ladyship; "Louisa has a *dull* heavy *countenance*, wholly void of animation; Mary is all *sensibility*; her feelings *wear* her frame—*she*, consequently, *requires more* nourishment; while Charlotte, who is naturally

turally inclined to be *en bon point,* must be *checked,* in order to *rescue* her understanding."

Our heroine could not agree in this whimsical explanation of her Ladyship's system, while Mrs. Welgrave declared, that it was erroneous, and calculated to lead the children into many errors—"I should fear for them, whenever *temptation* assails them—nay, I really perceive a material *alteration* in their looks."

"You alarm me!" said Lady Sarburton; "be *sincere,* I entreat of you."

"Why, then, candidly, they appear languid and emaciated; their spirits seem depressed, quite out of tone; none of that engaging liveliness, that usually accompanies children of their ages, is visible."

"But Lavater, my dear Welgrave; I have actually studied their countenances, till my mind has been wrought up to the most horrid anticipations!"

"Burn the illiberal deceiver!" said Mrs.

Welgrave, " and let your *vanity*, your *laudable* vanity, refute the vain predictions; you have a right, in your own *natural* character, to expect your children should be *amiable;* be content with what Heaven has done for them in their *persons*, and, instead of devising a *new* system of education, take up the long neglected routine of a *moral* education; be assured, that the precepts of Christianity, followed up by such practices as your fortune will admit, will do more for *theirs*' and your own happiness, than any *ideal* plan that our fancies could suggest."

" You have a most specious way of lowering one's self-confidence," said Lady Sarburton; " but I have an invincible dislike to the *present* mode of education; and I believe I have, in order to evince this, been somewhat fastidious in my own plans."

" We are all coxcombs in some way or other," said Mrs. Welgrave, smiling; " for

my

my own part, I am an old-fashioned one, and am resolved on making my girls *notable*, domestic—in short, housewives."

The Miss Sarburntons entered the room; her Ladyship, yet under the influence of her own system, felt the pulse of each of the children. Our heroine thought that their countenances uniformly indicated famine. Mrs. Welgrave, after some conciliating conversation with the young people, who evinced much intelligence and sweetness of manner, preferred her petition to Lady Sarburton.

"With pleasure," said her Ladyship, as she drew her purse, and added five guineas for the widow's aid. The children, as actuated by one sentiment, each opened their Morroco purses, and begged to offer their little mites.

"Dear girls," said Celia, while her eyes were dimmed by tears of celestial softness; "what just feelings!"

"I hope they are good children," said Lady Sarburton, with a look, in which the

honest

honest pride of the mother was tenderly conspicuous.

"They are *very* amiable," said Mrs. Welgrave, as she saluted their cheeks, and with our heroine retired, at once gratified and affected.

"Lady Sarburton is a charming woman," said Celia; "even her eccentricities are lost, in the evident virtue she possesses."

"It is very true," said Mrs. Welgrave, "though I must condemn her system; yet I trust she will be induced to yield the plan altogether, as I purpose to apprise her of a few particulars, of which she is at *present* unacquainted. Her children have, from this horrid restriction, been led into some little errors, which I mean to point out to her—such as *taking* food whenever they *think* they will not be discovered; and Welgrave never visits them, but he fills his pockets with cakes, and contrives to convey them into their hands—of course, the girls, who are discerning, will

con-

conceive their mother is not thought judicious in her management, and will be led into any deception that can encrease their comfort."

"But how can she ascertain, that they eat only such quantity as she ordered?" asked Celia.

"Their food is always weighed, and served up in pieces, which, from custom, are well known to their governess."

"Persevere, in pity's name!" said Celia, as she shook hands with her amiable friend on arriving at Lady Berton's; "rescue those sweet girls, and convince their mother, that she has every thing to hope from their *natural* characters."

Sir Peter listened to our heroine's account of her morning round; her remarks were perfectly in unison with his own; Mr. Berton, who dined in Hanover-square, appeared absent and thoughtful—"And I have made some whimsical calls," said Sir Peter; "it is lamentable to observe the degeneracy of the times. On being ushered

ushered to the drawing-room of one young man, whose *father* was an honour to his country, I found him engaged with a professed *pugilist*, not only taking a lesson, but acquiring, at the *same* time, a species of *language*, which he afterwards told me was used and *tolerated* in *society*, by the term *slang*. I found another employed in *leaping* for a considerable bet; his companions, by their names, I knew to be men of family. I remained only a short time, but *long* enough to see him *lose* a sum of money that might have been better employed. A third was surrounded by musicians, *himself* the *flattered fiddle* of the company—and I grieved internally, that *Fate* had made a nobleman of a *man*, evidently *born* to *fritter* away his existence to *semiquavers*—in fact, there appears no such being as a *well-bred* gentleman, a man who, from his *independant* rank in life, might be supposed to have had *leisure* to cultivate his understanding. But I must not omit to name another sort of cox-

comb,

comb, who fell in my way this morning," continued the Baronet, "an *inventive* genius, whom I found *happy*, and *greedily* swallowing the *compliments* of his *taylor*, to whom he had just imparted a most *ingenious* contrivance of a *pocket*, to be made in his *buck's coat*. 'Will your Lordship allow me to call it the *Quadrige pocket?*' said the taylor. My Lord paused—'D'amme yes—why not? the Buxtons, the Bladons, and the Barrymores, have had their day—yes, you may use my name,' said Lord Quadrige; 'I dare say it will take.' The taylor assured him it would, and departed to circulate this *imperious* item in the annals of fashion."

"I must rejoice, my dear George," said Lady Berton, "that your father was so judicious as to give *you* a profession; how many irksome hours it has taken off your hands, while its study must have been a source of infinite delight!"

George declared, that *all* his father's decisions were well intended; yet he wished

he had filled a situation more immediately under the eye of his parents.

Lady Berton looked anxiously at her son. The Baronet, smiling, "hoped George had not lost a good client that morning?"

"I assuredly have," said Mr. Berton, rising.

"Will you not stay with us?" asked the tender mother.

"Not this evening, my dear Madam," said George, taking the hand of her Ladyship; "but I will be with you in the morning," and, bowing to Celia, he hastily retired.

"My child is unhappy," said Lady Berton.

"I rather think, my dear, that our son has been overtaken by the world," said Sir Peter. "I have such reliance on the goodness of his *heart*, that I do not believe it is a *material* inroad; at all events, we shall soon discover the extent, for he is *unreserved;* and I would rather he *felt* a

few

few of the consequences of his errors, than, by a mistaken *clemency* on our parts, heal the *salutary* compunctions of conscience, who

> " ——— notes each moment misapplied ;
> In leaves more durable than leaves of brass,
> Writes our whole history."

Lady Berton was fondly attached to her son ; she believed him incapable of glaring follies, as such, entitled to her *sympathy ;* thus, ere she retired for the night, she dispatched a few lines to George, expressive of her anxiety, and a gentle *hint*, that she expected his confidence.

Celia beheld the uneasiness of her esteemed friend with real concern, owning, in her own pure mind, all the *calm* of innocence. It seemed to her more than probable, that the depression of Mr. Berton proceeded from a cause more *potent* than maternal *affection* was willing to admit—whether *love* or *friendship* were most discerning, remains to be elucidated.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

"Art, cursed Art! wipes off the indented blush
From Nature's cheek, and bronzes ev'ry shame:
Man smiles in ruin, glories in his guilt,
And Infamy stands candidate for praise."

The few days that remained of our heroine's purposed sojourn in Hanover-square bore no feature worthy of record, save only the continued inquietude of the amiable mistress of the mansion, whose truant son appeared rarely, and always in evident haste to retire. Yet his manners were far more attractive than Celia had at first thought them, and to her he was assiduous and conciliating—"You leave my mother to-day?" said George Berton, as he heard Celia order Patty to prepare for their departure.

Celia

Celia replied in the affirmative.

"Let me ask of you to see her as often as you can," said Mr. Berton; "*she* will, with myself, have reason to lament your absence."

Celia declared, that the request was too much in unison with her feelings to be refused.

"I may not see you again *immediately*," said George, taking the hand of our heroine —"Forgive my presumption, Miss Delacour: the time was, when I might, with honest pride, have told you, what I *now* blush to acknowledge, that to be distinguished by *you* would have been at once the bliss of my life, and the reward of a *love*, pure as your virtues could claim—I love you, Celia; but I am unworthy of you. That childish intercourse, which marked our early days, has sprung up in my heart, revived with a potency that assures me that *love* is not the growth of a day."

Celia endeavoured to repress the tender

eclaircissement. She was flattered by his esteem, regarded him as a brother, and, if he would divest his language of an inference so extensive, she should be happy to assure him of her esteem—"Could *she* effect his peace of mind, by telling his mother that he was under any inquietude?"

"No; not for the world," said Mr. Berton; "*she* could not restore my peace; I am doomed to give anguish, where I would die to prove my affection.—Heaven bless you Celia!" said the subdued Berton, as he respectfully raised the hand of our heroine to his lips, and retired.

Celia was unfeignedly interested in the feelings of Mr. Berton. There was in his character a generosity of sentiment, a warmth of heart, that was irresistibly attractive; but had he been as amiable as *she had* remembered him, as uncontaminated by the world as she had once known him, yet *he* was not the sort of man to whom *she* could have yielded her heart—"I believe I *know* the feeling to be spontaneous

—*Love*

—*Love* is anterior to *reflection;* but that *love* which will not *bear* reflection," said Celia, mentally, "can never constitute happiness."

Lady Berton reluctantly parted with her young friend. Sir Peter, as an assurance of the value in which he held *her* society, declared that *he* purposed to be *one* amongst the group invited to a *select* party at Lady Townly's, fixed for the next week.

The return of our heroine was welcomed by her sister with sincere pleasure. Sir Harry seemed in better spirits. He was eloquent in his approval of his Lady's solidity—"We have been at home three evenings," said he, "with no company except Belford—nay, I already fancy that your sister looks better for this quiet."

Celia readily admitted the impression; while Lady Townly, half laughing, resorted to the mirror, declaring she believed they were in a league to *deceive* her into *happiness,* by flattering her *vanity.*

"Your *practice* will amply illustrate the *motives* of those who love you," said Celia, "while its effects will *constitute* a *beauty* that no *mirror* could reflect, because it is *internal.*"

"So *this* is to *reprove* my *vanity,*" said Lady Townly, turning from the glass.

"Rather to *improve* it, Fanny," said the Baronet; "for Celia judiciously infers, that *mental* beauty is preferable to *personal* attractions."

"I should be sorry that they could not *blend,*" said her Ladyship, with a look too much like *vanity* to be grateful to our heroine.

A servant delivered a parcel to Lady Townly, and at the same time announced Mr. Belford.

The Baronet beheld the influence that Celia had on the feelings of his friend with unaffected concern; for it was obvious to him she *esteemed* him, but no more.

"I had calculated correctly," said Mr. Belford,

Belford, addressing Celia; "you see I am punctual—how have you done without my cues?"

"Pretty well," said Celia; "but you know I have been in a domestic circle, excepting one morning, and then Mrs. Welgrave was my *chaperon*."

Sir Harry and Belford united in opinion, that every hour passed in the society of such a woman was an hour gained.

"My dear Townly," said her Ladyship, opening the parcel, "how kind! really this is quite unexpected—Are they not beautiful, Celia?" and she presented a most expensive set of emeralds for the inspection of Celia.

"I heard you say you admired them," said the Baronet.

Celia thought them very handsome.

"How unique!" said her Ladyship, placing each ornament agreeably to their designation, and again regarding herself in the mirror.

Celia blushed—To her there was much

weakness in betraying such pleasure at a present of the sort. She thought it very natural to be gratified by the attention of a husband, to appreciate the gift as a proof of his remembrance; but to view herself with such apparent satisfaction, was ridiculous. Mr. Belford smiled. The footsteps of Rachel caught the ear of Celia. She arose to meet her niece. The child was overjoyed when she learned that her "dear Celia" was come home again—"What pretty playthings!" said the little girl, looking at the present of the Baronet—"Did papa buy them for Rachel?"

"They are *mine*," said Lady Townly, laughing, and explaining the different articles by name.

"Then *you* are *very* good," said Rachel. —"May mama wear all these?" asked the little reasoner, turning to Celia.

"*I* wear these things, because it is the *fashion*," said Lady Townly.

"Fashion!" said Rachel, pausing.

"What

"What is fashion?" asked Celia, addressing the child.

"Why, fashion is not to wear *pockets,*" said Rachel.

The laugh that ensued deranged Rachel's explanation, till Celia, placing the child by her side, encouraged her to proceed.

"Why, Minet walked out with me yesterday, and I asked her to give me some money for a poor little girl, and she said she had no money; and I told her to feel in her *pockets,* but she said she had none; and when I asked her why, she said, 'It was not the *fashion.*"

"What a satire on the *leaders* of such folly!" said Mr. Belford, "and how forcibly does it impress the necessity of placing *children* under the care of something superior to this *pocketless* damsel."

"The nurse-maid of Rachel," said our heroine, "is a well-mannered unassuming woman. I have been at some pains to understand her character, and must believe her in all respects unexceptionable."

The Baronet spoke in praise of Martin, while Lady Townly was wholly engaged in admiring her emeralds.

Celia was anxious to correct the ideas of Rachel with respect to *fashion*. The *line* was somewhat difficult to draw, where the *mother* had avowed herself as *wearing* jewels, because they were the *fashion*; yet she made the attempt, and, with much success, illustrated that it was *benevolent* to encourage the making of ornaments, because a number of *families* were supported by their use—"And pockets are useful," continued Celia; and she exemplified the happiness that Rachel might have been able to diffuse, had she had money when she wished to relieve the child.

"Then *some* fashions are *naughty*," said Rachel, with infinite simplicity.

"They are," said Celia; "and till *you* can know the *useful* from the *naughty*, my little Rachel will not make use of the word."

The child was satisfied by the explanation, and

and our heroine, promising to teach her to *make* a pocket, added to the happiness of the fondly-attached Rachel.

"Celia," said Lady Townly, "all your ideas are correct; yet *how* you can have acquired such a *practical* knowledge of the mode by which children should be educated, is amazing to me. Really, my dear girl, I should be sorry to think you never intended to marry, though actually it will be next to impossible that you should, unless you are more encouraging than at present. There is Danbury, for instance, he quite annoys *me*—nay, I have half consented to let him run down to Hadley, to ask aunt Martha's leave to address you in form."

"How ridiculous!" said Celia, looking serious; "you cannot suppose me so credulous, or that my *vanity* is gratified by your mirth."

"It is certain that Danbury has avowed himself your slave," said Sir Harry; "but I bade him take thought, nor tempt an humiliation

humiliation so dreadful to a beau. I was assured you could not like him," continued Sir Harry, "or I should not have crushed his hopes."

"You either have *no* heart to give, Celia, or your mind is very *romantic*," said Lady Townly; "for Danbury is a handsome man, possessed of a good fortune—nay, I know half a dozen families into which he could match, if he chose: but you are insensible even to the elegant Berton, who, if he was as poor as poverty could make him, would find *fortune* in the form of many a *generous* maid—Yes, I see how it is; you *appear* very diffident of yourself, but are, in *reality*, a very aspiring saucy girl."

"The charge is just," said Celia; "though I believe our sentiments are *distinct* as to the *presumption* of my nature.—I may *aspire*, but I cannot be *deceived*."

"I think Berton appears to have acquired solidity," said the Baronet, addressing Mr. Belford.

Mr.

Mr. Belford thought him less volatile; but he forbore to enlarge on the subject.

"There is a most happy proportion of *jealousy* in your sex," said Lady Townly, laughing; "I declare I frequently say *more* than I would in praise of two or three young men of my acquaintance, merely because I perceive the vexation it causes.

The motive is *amiable,*" said Sir Harry, smiling.

"It is laughable," said Mr. Belford.— "The characters of women, *generally* speaking, are highly wrought. Thus, when they *praise* from *principle* and from *pique,* the *distinction* is easily traced. In the *first,* their *sensibility* distinguishes even the *defects* of the approved, with a colouring exuberant yet *flattering* to the object; in the *latter,* their applause is the *badinage* of *sentiment*— such *palpable* caricature, that they *elucidate* where they *mean* to deceive."

"What an impertinent analysis!" said Lady Townly.

"I fear

" I fear it is a most correct one," said Celia.

" What, do you admit that we are such ridiculous creatures?" said her Ladyship, addressing Celia.

" I rather consider Mr. Belford has drawn too *flattering* a portrait," rejoined our heroine; " he has given more of *nature* to us than we dare claim."

" This is *affected* humility, a very ruinous assertion; my dear girl, reflect, you are putting arms in the hands of despotic *man*, that would, if *generally* sanctioned, sink us below our noble selves."

" It is in your *artificial* characters that you lose your *superiority*," said the Baronet —" A *natural*, unaffected woman, is a creature who commands respect, even from the vicious. A *libertine* will not appreciate such a being as she *deserves*; yet he is *conscious* of her worth, while he *feels* she is *above* his censure."

" You remind me of Ellincourt," said Belford—" he has obtained a divorce, and retired

retired with his children, I believe, into Wales."

"What an amiable fellow he is!" said Sir Harry.

"He deserved his fate," said Lady Townly; "never did man exert such an undue influence; it was quite ridiculous—poor Lady Ellincourt, if she walked, it must be with *him;* she must not *dance,* unless she would wave *established etiquette,* and allow *him* to be her partner—he looked over her cards, and selected *such* as he chose she should visit; and I *heard* him call her deceptious, because she received old Snowdon, according to the 'usage of society,' and laughed (as we all do) the moment she had quitted the room. She must go to church *every* Sunday; and if she declined it, he would not permit her to take the air all that day; yet he managed all this under such a *specious appearance* of affection, that I really believe few women have met less *pity* than this *married* martyr."

"Fanny, I beseech you not to defend

such

such a woman," said Sir Harry: "she is, of all beings, least worthy of regard; when I look at her deceived and honourable partner, behold the ravages which grief has made on his fine person, have witnessed the torture of his bosom, when his innocent and *deserted* children have awakened the liveliest sensibility by their artless questions, I have been tempted to forget she was a woman—Never let me hear *you* attempt to *qualify* her errors: she is the vilest of her sex."

Lady Townly, half angry, requested the Baronet would signify his *commands* in terms less *peremptory*.

"Forgive me," said Sir Harry, extending his hand, "you know my friendship for Ellincourt, and the perfect respect I *once* owned for his wretched wife. I have heard you exhibit the *virtues* of my friend as so many *apologies* for the criminality of Augusta. Consider *yourself*—remember, that though *compassion* is a lovely and becoming attribute of your sex, you cannot

tolerate

tolerate a *moral* defection, but by *degrading* yourselves. Should she fall into *poverty*, by the *neglect* of her protector, should she need your aid, let your hand and heart be ready to *administer* to her comfort; but *yet* retain the *pride* of *virtue*—save her from *further* guilt, by every means in your power, *sooth* and *recal* her wandering soul; but let it be with the *zeal* of a *Christian*, not the *approval* of an associate."

"Sir Frederic will marry her *directly*," said Lady Townly—"she will be received in society, and we shall *all* forget what is past."

"Not all," said the Baronet, with warmth, "nor shall she ever be admitted *here*, under *any* name."

Celia blushed for her sister. There was a want of delicacy in her present defence, for which she could find no excuse—it was beyond thoughtlessness—it was levity. If her understanding was not warped, her *religion* must be imperfect; and though the Baronet had descanted on her *solidity*,

Celia believed her either *relapsing* into her usual habits, or, what she trembled to accredit, *insincere.*

"It is dreadful to observe the *false* characters under which women now appear," said Mr. Belford; "to see the multitude *countenancing* errors, that the *meanest* sense of religion must refute; yet with what *supine* austerity they look *down* upon the *deceived* victim of man's unhallowed love, with what *fortitude* they will cast the wretched *wanderer* from their favour; no encouraging hand is stretched out, to place *her* in society—she is *beneath* the suffrage of the *great;* while the *accomplished* seducer, who leads the *married* woman from the path of honour, is absolutely carressed, supported in his *infamy,* and his guilty partner *received* where she ought to be spurned: yet her associates would dare to be offended, if told that *their* delicacy was *questionable,* in suffering an innovation so prejudicial to morality, so *encouraging* to vice."

"In

"In the name of goodness, what could I possibly do, if I met Lady Ellincourt at the parties of my friends?" said Lady Townly; "could *I* turn my back on her, when *others* have thought proper to overlook what has happened?"

"It might cost you a pang," said Sir Harry, "from the *remembrance* of what she *was*; but the knowledge of what she *is*, should dictate the conduct *proper* for *every* woman of virtue to observe."

"Well, I sincerely hope she may not come in my way," said Lady Townly; "for *my* feelings would not permit *me* to be so *rigid.*"

"You are imposing on yourself, Fanny," said the Baronet; "mistaking weakness, a mean *submission* to worldly opinions, for *sensibility*. It is, like all the *artifices* of the garish cheat, a brazen mask; and if the *prolific* despot did not intoxicate ye by his *variety*, *Reason* would usurp her throne, and restore you to your *natural* characters."

"Celia, you will go with me to Lady Desmond's this evening?" said Lady Townly —"I accepted the invitation for you."

"Does Townly go?" asked Celia.

The Baronet replied in the affirmative, and our heroine assented.

"I shall see you," said Mr. Belford; "I mean to be of the mob, but it will be late, for I dine with Berton at his chambers."

"Mr. Berton appears to need the society of a friend," said Celia; "he is quite out of spirits."

Belford regarded Celia with attention.

"This is a *beginning*," said Lady Townly —"If once you condescend to *compassionate*, Celia, you will learn to love."

"I must change my disposition, if I could be insensible to the uneasiness of those I esteem; and Lady Berton is so evidently depressed by the alteration in her son's manner, that I not only avow myself anxious to see her peace restored, but interested for George, whom I believe in many points amiable."

Mr.

Mr. Belford coincided in part, and, as he arose, declared, "That if anything could alleviate the *present mélancolie* of Berton, it would be the *sympathy* of Miss Delacour; but *I* have not the *temerity* to offer the balm," continued Belford, "nor yet the *hardihood* to *wish* it *more* than *friendship*."

"Ah! my poor Belford!" said Lady Townly, as the door closed, "caught at last!—Really, Miss Delacour, if your charms had not already made some *considerable* conquests, I must say that your *vanity*, in the *present* case, could not be much elevated."

"We differ," said Celia—"the *conquests* to which you attach value seem to me truly ridiculous; as if it was possible men, whom I have merely seen in large assemblies, of whose characters I know nothing, and who are *perfect strangers* to mine, could for a moment engage my attention. If my *vanity* can be flattered, it is by the approbation of *those* who know me; and, of all the

men I have yet seen, Mr. Belford's good opinion is of most consequence to me. —I like his character, and I honour his principles."

"*Mon Dieu!*" said Lady Townly, laughing—"a *mutual* passion! Well, my dear Celia, a more *eccentric* choice you could not have made—at least, you will be the *rage* for a season!"

"I wish Belford was destined to a lot so happy," said the Baronet—"nay, I wish that Celia was disposed to requite his love; but she is *not*. I understand her feelings better than you do, Fanny.—May she meet a heart as fondly attached to her, as worthy of her unreserved affection!"

Celia blushed. It was by now beyond a doubt certain, that Mr. Belford had confided his feelings to his friend; it was by no means a triumph to our heroine; her ideas of love were not *those* of a *moderne*. Divesting it of all romance, she believed it possible to have a serious effect on a good mind—"For does not the *self-created* image of

of the *fancy* awaken our sensibility?" said Celia, mentally; "and when we *see* our *thoughts* personified, it must either prove the perfection of sentiment, or the tomb of hope." And she secretly resolved to avoid, as much as, possible, every occasion that could add to a preference, which she was assured she could not requite.

The avowal of Mr. Berton made no impression on our heroine; for though he might be *sincere* in his love, the natural liveliness of his character would soon leave him at liberty to sigh elsewhere.

Lady Townly, decked in her emeralds, seemed wholly absorbed in self. Celia, simply attired, attended her Ladyship to St. James's-square. The same faces, the same manners, that distinguish a *certain circle*, were conspicuous.

"You are quite a pedestrian," said Lady Desmond, as she addressed Celia,—"I have seen you several mornings, with your *rustic* attendant—you cannot imagine, my dear Miss Delacour, what odd remarks

(those who do not *know* you) make upon this village Cymon."

"He is an excellent and favourite servant," said Celia—"I would not exchange him, for any that London could produce."

"It is all prejudice, I believe," said her Ladyship, shrugging her shoulders.

"Entirely so, I am persuaded," said Celia.

"Were you at Lady Frost's last night?" said Lady Bab Blindon, who, with her brother, joined our heroine.

Celia replied in the negative.

"Well, my dear creature, let me describe it:—Her *rooms* are so *small*, that one has scarcely the power of breathing; then she is so anxious to show off her *daughters*, that she introduces music incessantly, so that you are forced to stop your ears, in order to avoid being stunned; and when you perceive, by the manner of *some*, (who are obliged to *appear* pleased), that the exhibition is over, you find yourself too *late* to offer *your expected* applause:—but it won't

do;

do; the girls remain; though it must be allowed she does not spare expence, and her *dinners* may boast all the beaux of consequence.—How are you? I hope you have conquered the fatigue of last night?" said Lady Bab to the *person* she had been thus eloquent in ridiculing.

"Have you seen Ernmore?" said Lady Frost—"He promised to be my escort this evening, and has not yet made his appearance."

"He dined with us," replied Lady Bab; "but we dropped him at Bridoon's, who has just arrived with his *lovely* bride."

"What a bore!" said Lady Frost—"I would not be punished by a visit of the sort."

"One is forced to bear with *many* disagreeables," retorted Lady Bab, with a smile —"for instance, *your* stuffed parties," she continued, in a low voice. "Adieu, for the present—Oh! here comes Querelle; now for a catalogue of horrors; she will run

through all the diseases that are known, invent half a thousand that never existed, and offer a *pharmacopeia*, with all the dignity of an M.D.——What an atmosphere!" said Lady Bab, addressing Lady Querelle.

"It is intense, my dear friend," replied her Ladyship; "but I am guarded;" and she resorted to her gold scent-box.

Mrs. Welgrave advanced.

"Tell me candidly," said Lady Querelle, arresting the progress of this amiable woman, "may I *venture* to hold converse with you?"

"You are quite safe," said Mrs. Welgrave, taking the arm of Celia; "I publish my *family bulletin* by *being here*."

"Aye, *that* I can believe," said Lady Querelle; "but have you not been *seeking* danger, if not death, in your *morning charities*?"

"I do not go into danger voluntarily," said Mrs. Welgrave; and turning to Celia, she

she entered into a conversation that drew our heroine from her fashionable companion.

Lady Bab joined another party.

"This young lady carries a bill of health in her countenance," said Lady Querelle—"it must be a source of infinite happiness to you, Madam."

Celia declared herself grateful.

"Yet persons so rudely healthy are a certain prey in all epidemic attacks," continued Lady Querelle.

"Life is a frail tenure with us all," said Celia—"we should endeavour to be prepared."

"I am *always* prepared, always guarded," said her Ladyship, again snuffing her aromatic vinegar—"you are perfectly right," and dropping our heroine, she took the arm of Mrs. Bruton.

"What a strange being!" said Celia.

"Quite a character," said Mrs. Welgrave. "She consults all the men of eminence, with

with as much formality as if she was really ill. Some have declined her summons; others laugh at her, and, by subscribing to her foible, eventually wrest her fortune, for she is indefatigable till she gains acquiescence."

Lady Cardonnel, attended by Lord Ernmore and Mr. Bridoon, approached. Her Ladyship was in high spirits.

"Here I am, *sans ceremonie*," said Bridoon —"I must see Lady Desmond."

"You cruel creature," said the fair hostess, "when you know how we languish to see your good Lady, not to apprize me of your arrival."

Lady Cardonnel hid her face behind her fan; while Bridoon, with fashionable *nonchalance*, replied to her Ladyship; but, contrary to the hopes of Lady Cardonnel, the gallant bridegroom joined our heroine, with whom he found Lord Ernmore—"Now for a dutiful apology," said Bridoon; "here comes *your* mama, Ernmore."

The

The young Lord looked vexed.

"You are a most dilatory beau," said Lady Frost, somewhat piqued.

"I must throw myself on your clemency," said his Lordship.

"I have a message for you," continued the wily mother.

"I will attend you presently, Madam," said Lord Ernmore, passing on.

Her Ladyship paused for a moment, then using her fan with some vehemence, she flung herself into a seat, in order to *watch* her prey.

"You cannot imagine how often I have reflected on our *last* meeting," said Bridoon, addressing Celia.

"Indeed!" said our heroine, smiling—"and our *first* too, I believe, for we never met but *once*."

"Your memory is vastly correct," said Bridoon; "I am highly flattered by the recollection."

"Make way for an aspiring bachelor," said Mr. Danbury, putting Bridoon on one side —"my

—"my dear Miss Delacour, these married men are the most presuming creatures in existence—allow me the honour of attending you."

Lord Ernmore declared it would be difficult to draw a line in the *present* instance.

Mrs. Bruton and Miss Desmond approached—"How excessively well Lady Townly looks to-night!" said Mrs. Bruton; "she is a most *fascinating* woman."

Celia was silent; she had not forgotten this lady's former mention of her sister.

"Lady Townly is very handsome, no doubt," said Danbury; "I always thought her so; but I have lived to see *her*, all lovely as she is, completely eclipsed;" and he bowed to our heroine.

"You must be cautious in admitting Mr. Danbury's compliments," said Mrs. Bruton; "he says the same to every young lady."

"After a *time*," said Mr. Belford, who had awaited Mrs. Bruton's remark ere he addressed our heroine.

"He

"He is a contemplative genius, we *all* know," said Lord Ernmore; "pray, what is the term of his ruminations?"

"Only till he has learned the *connexions* and *expectations* of his fair enslaver," replied Belford.

Mr. Danbury looked fierce; Lord Ernmore laughed immoderately.

"Be passive," said Mr. Belford, speaking in a low voice; "*I* dined with Berton."

Danbury was quiescent, and soon disappeared.

"How intolerably stupid!" said Lady Cardonnel; "did you ever feel yourselves more inclined to take a nap? I have contrived to yawn two or three times before our Lady-hostess, in order to give her a hint that something was wanting."

Before Mrs. Welgrave or Celia could reply, Lady Bab Blindon advanced—"The secret's out," said she; "we *are* to have music; but poor Desmond has been *cavilling* with the *professors*, till within this half

hour,

hour, and *now* we must shut our eyes, or *appear* to be blind, while the arrangements are made."

"She is an admirable economist," said Lady Cardonnel; "but there is something vastly impertinent in collecting a party, with no intention of *amusing* them."

Celia smiled; and Mr. Belford, with an appropriate glance, observed, "that *Fashion* smiled on her *votaries* this evening; for *see*," said he, "what an efficient *interlude* is just announced!"

"Quadrige, I declare!" said the ladies, with a gracious smile, and a perfect *survey* and adjustment of their *draperies*, not omitting the *disposition* of their *gorgon* ringlets.

My Lord advanced; his figure was manly and graceful; a conscious *sense* of his *personal* advantages was apparent in every movement. All the ladies endeavoured to catch his eye, while the men were examining and contrasting his dress.

"I will

"I will be cruel," said Mrs. Welgrave, in a low voice; and she addressed Lord Quadrige.

"My dear Madam," said the Peer, joining Mrs. Welgrave, "how are we to account for this condescension, you so seldom grace the motley circle?—Ah! I presume," and he bowed to Celia, "this lady is the lovely cause."

Mrs. Welgrave declared that chance alone had given her the pleasure of Miss Delacour's society that evening.

"Miss Delacour!" repeated my Lord, "I certainly remember the name."

"This lady is a sister of Lady Townly's," rejoined Mrs. Welgrave, introducing our heroine.

"I was conscious of a more than ordinary feeling," said Lord Quadrige—"yes, I perceive the same expression, the same exquisite *animation*, that at once charms and murders the peace of us poor devils."

"You

"You look well for a murdered lover," said Belford.

"Aye, Belford, you may laugh," said my Lord; "you were *once* the repository of my tender sentiments, but you have grown callous, a perfect barbarian."

"Or rather is it not *you* who have changed," replied Belford—"you have become a leader."

"The very question I was going to ask," said Lady Bab, interrupting Mr. Belford—"Do tell us what *colours* your *leaders* are to be on the *bucks' starting day?* for there will be no discovering one's *friends,* the *dress* is so *elegantly* exact, so unique."

"You will know us by the *precedence* in which we move," said my Lord, with an air of triumph; at the same time going through the *fashionable* list.

"We are all looking forward to the day with the highest expectation," said Lady Bab.

"We

"We will endeavour not to *disappoint* you," said the Peer, with a countenance as serious as though the *contention* had been *one* in which a man might be *proud* to be *classed*.

The concert began; but the ladies seemed to have forgotten their *ennui*, till Lord Quadrige attended our heroine and Mrs. Welgrave to the music-room.

"Charming! bravo!" was repeated before the performers had displayed their talents at exciting such raptures.

Lady Desmond sang a bravura; it was followed by a duo between Miss Desmond and Lord Ernmore; Lady Frost declaring, in a loud whisper, that Miss Desmond's *voice* was not suited to the tenor of my Lord—"Did you ever hear Caroline and Ernmore?" said her Ladyship, turning to Mr. Danbury.

"A thousand times," said the flatterer, "and *always* with *increased* admiration."

Mr. Bridoon, accompanied by a very

handsome-looking man, entered the room. Celia thought the countenance of Mr. Belford seemed indignant. Mrs. Welgrave turned towards the door—"Milner, I declare!" said she, turning pale; "get me out of this crowd, my dear Belford," she added, "and, if possible, unperceived."

At this moment Sir Harry waved his hand to Celia, who, understanding the summons, withdrew, under the care of Belford. The agitation of Mrs. Welgrave seemed of a nature that repelled alleviation from active services. Celia placed her arm silently through her own—"Do not let *me* take you away," said Mrs. Welgrave.

Celia explained, that she never remained at any party after twelve, if she could conveniently retire.

"Then we will go together," said Mrs. Welgrave; "Sir Harry can return to Lady Townly, and Mr. Belford shall take charge of us."

Mr. Belford gladly accepted the permission.

"Poor

"Poor Berkley," said Mrs. Welgrave; "how happy I am that he is removed from the possibility of such a meeting!"

"He was always judicious, always well-judging," said Mr. Belford, "and will, I trust, regain, in his present retirement, that peace which he has a right to expect."

Celia was interested in the feelings of her amiable friend, who, as she put her down in Portman-square, affectionately pressing her hand, made her promise to spend the next morning in Devonshire-place. Celia cheerfully assented; and receiving two notes from the hands of Richard, ascended to the drawing-room. Their contents were cause of deep surprise to our heroine. The first was from Mr. Berton, who claimed the honour of half an hour's conversation, at a period as early as her kindness would permit. The second was in a female hand, and written with much simplicity. It asked her pardon for the

presumption of the address; yet in the next line was assured of her forgiveness and acquiescence—"I have heard—I *know* you are amiable," said the unaffected writer; "I cannot shock your *sight*, for *I* am not a blushless child of error—but I am *fallen*, miserably fallen." And the note concluded in terms respectful, but bearing no signature or address.

Celia *paused* over this appeal to her feelings, with profound yet unsuccessful meditation. She had, during her residence in London, replied to many of those distressful tales which fill the columns of our diurnal prints; but *this* was ambiguous: yet she resolved to treasure the billet, in the hope that the writer would recollect her *inaccuracies*, and give her the opportunity of being useful.

To Mr. Berton she purposed to reply next day. To grant his request was but reasonable—nay, *impossible* to refuse; the purport, be it what it would, she could feel

no

no hesitation in replying to. She had scarcely *reperused* the affecting billet, ere the Baronet and his Lady arrived.

" Did you see Sir Frederick Milner?" said Lady Townly, addressing her sister.

Celia believed she had, if *he* was the gentleman who came into the music-room with Mr. Bridoon.

" Is he not a very fine young man?" asked Lady Townly.

" I did not observe him," said our heroine.

" I will learn if Lady Desmond invited him," said Sir Harry: " if she did, *you* shall not leave your cards there again."

" Poh! you must not be so precise," said Lady Townly—" *I* know she did, for she told *me*, that while the *divorce* was pending, she had passed him over; but *now that* was over, she had set the *example* to us all."

" She is mistaken," said the Baronet.

" Did Welgrave see him?" continued Lady Townly.

Celia gave a partial explanation.

"She will conquer her fine feelings in *time*," said her Ladyship—"Sir Frederick is the *protector*, and will soon be the *husband* of Lady Ellincourt."

"Mrs. Welgrave is too virtuous a woman, and too fondly attached to her cousin, ever to be *reconciled* to the sight of his infamous destroyer," said Sir Harry.

And Celia now learned, that Lord Ellincourt was the kinsman of Mrs. Welgrave. It accounted for the sensibility of her feelings in the late *rencontre*, and she now recollected those expressions of her amiable friend as applied to *herself*, when speaking on the subject of marriage.

"It is certainly beneath the character of a delicate woman to admit a known seducer into her parties," said Celia, "more especially when she has a family growing up, and mixing in her circle."

"It is vile," said Sir Harry; "but what will you say, my dear Celia, when I declare, that I heard a man *compliment* Sir Frederick

on

on having *fixed* the *affections* of one of the finest women in England?"

"Say!" replied Celia, as she took her taper from the side-table, "why, I will say, with my aunt Mansfield, that the times are 'sadly out of joint:'—Life, in London, seems *wasted*, not *used*; they live as if they held their days upon a *lease*, that can be *renewed* at pleasure."

"It is too true," said Sir Harry: "Dr. Cotton expresses this with infinite beauty—

'But soft, my friend—arrest the present moments;
For be assur'd, they all are arrant tell-tales;
And though their flight be silent, and their path
Trackless, as the wing'd couriers of the air,
They post to Heav'n, and there record thy folly;
Because, though station'd on th' important watch,
Thou, like a sleeping faithless sentinel,
Didst let them pass unnoticed, unimprov'd.
And know, for that thou slumber'st on the guard,
Thou shalt be made to answer at the bar
For ev'ry fugitive: and when thou thus
Shalt stand impleaded at the high tribunal
Of hoodwink'd Justice, who shall tell thy audit!

Then

Then stay the present instant, dear Horatio;
Imprint the marks of wisdom on its wings:
'Tis of more worth than kingdoms! far more precious
Than all the crimson treasures of life's fountain.
Oh! let it not elude thy grasp, but, like
The good old patriarch upon record,
Hold the fleet angel fast, until he bless thee.'

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

CHAP. XIII.

She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distrest;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn.

GOLDSMITH.

....

Alas! no more that joyous morn appears,
That led the tranquil hours of spotless fame,
For I have steep'd a father's couch in tears,
And ting'd a mother's glowing cheek with shame.

SHENSTONE.

WHETHER the *heart* be *interested* in the communication, or *friendship's tempered* feeling actuates the epistolary *reply* of a woman, it is, to a *delicate* mind, a task somewhat arduous:—Celia owned this, as she took her pen next morning, to reply to Mr. Berton. She was in possession of his

his sentiments, and she *believed* his *present* request to bear a reference to those sentiments. As relative to *her* feelings, the interview could not be too *soon* dismissed. Couching a short, but polite acquiescence, she repaired to the library of the Baronet, and simply stating to him what she had done, requested *he* would forward it to Mr. Berton.

Sir Harry applauded her unaffected candour—" Berton has shown a refinement in his present admiration, of which I had not thought him capable," said Sir Harry, " for his feelings have been some time blunted, by the voluntary *adulation* of the females with whom he has mixed; at all events, it will prove of service to him, for there is not a more humiliating pang, than *that* which the calm refusal of a beloved object can inflict."

Celia neither imagined *him* as under so implicit a feeling, or *herself* more than usually *correct,* in submitting her billet to the inspection of Sir Harry.

She

She had risen to retire, *had* reached the door, when a servant announced Lord Ellincourt; and in the next moment, a tall elegant-looking man, whose fine features seemed clouded by care, entered the room. He stood irresolute. Sir Harry ran to embrace him; and our heroine seized that opportunity to withdraw. In passing through the hall, she observed a travelling chariot, equipped for a journey, in waiting. —"He is wise," thought Celia; "what peace can there be for a man, under *his* circumstances, in a town like this, where the *vicious* are *sanctioned*, and the *dishonoured* reviled? and *women*, to *justify* these grievous errors," said the musing Celia, "arraigning the virtuous solicitude, the tender zeal, of an attached husband, as harsh *restrictions*, *arbitrary* influence!—Never may *I* meet a being who shall *deceive* my *heart*, by gaining its *confidence*, and proving *indifferent* to its *every* feeling!"

"Celia," said the Baronet, as he entered the

the drawing-room, "I would ask your silence with regard to Ellincourt; Fanny will not hear of his visit, and *he* is particularly desirous that it should not be known he has been in London."

Celia instantly assented, and Sir Harry spoke on indifferent subjects.

Lady Townly sent an apology for her nonappearance at breakfast—"She had *three* parties at which she *must* be visible *that* evening, and would indulge herself, in order to bear the fatigue."

Celia smiled, but made no comment.

"It will always be thus," said the Baronet, "while we remain here."

"Then why do you brave such a certain evil?" asked Celia.

"There is no remedy, my dear Celia; your sister *will* not go to the Hall; she hates the northern air, and there is no society. I have, for the last three seasons, hired villas; but *these* are even worse than London; the *intrusions* are insufferable; the very phalanx from whom one flees, in

in the hope of *quiet,* pursue you to these retirements; and then, *because* it is *fashionable* to be *rural* for a *few* weeks in the year, they devise the most ridiculous modes of *destroying* time, insomuch that I have actually sought refuge in town for a day or two, as a release, and been content to wander over these dismantled apartments, owning in their stillness a degree of comfort that my *fancied* retirement denied me."

"I am persuaded that a visit to Hadley would effect the happiest revolution in Fanny's sentiments," said our heroine, "if not wholly subvert them. Adopt the plan, my dear Townly; you know not how our good aunt sighs for this—forgive me when I add, that *she* ascribes the imperfection of your *domestic* happiness to your false indulgence. She knows the goodness of your heart, and the power my sister has on your feelings; yet she continually deplores this tenderness, as the primary cause of all your discontent."

"I fear she is right," said the Baronet; "and

"and if I did not consider it too late, I would certainly alter my system."

"Oh! say not too late," said Celia, as she stemmed the genuine tear of sensibility; "*I* would not think so for worlds; for what a thoughtless, what a criminal career is a life of unceasing pleasure?—they *call* it *pleasure;* but, in truth, it is a wilful deception; the unfeminine traits are illustrated in its round, the most cruel *slanders* are elicited, where the *mask* of friendship apparently smiles. They *censure* for qualities that are truly amiable, and *applaud* where *virtue* should blush to own a *recognition.* Religion seems wholly forgotten; and though *liberality* of *sentiment* is garbled by every tongue, *charity* is exploded. I have heard the most afflicting appeal disregarded, nay rejected, and the fair harbinger of mercy, who *pleaded for* the distressed, *treated* as though *she* was the applicant, as if we were not *all* of one family."

Might she not have added,

"How

"How deep are we in arrears to the distressed? The distressed have, from reason, as just a demand on our superfluities, as we have, from law, on our stewards for our estates. But this is no *play-debt*, and therefore, without dishonour, undischarged."

The breakfast had scarcely gone out when Mr. Berton was announced. Celia *felt* as though she erred in allowing his visit; yet could she have denied it, without coquetry, without vanity? Sir Harry, after a short period, withdrew—"This amiable frankness, my dear Miss Delacour, is most justly appreciated by your friend," said Mr. Berton; "I have pressed into your presence, with all the temerity of my character; and now that I am blessed by your sight, feel myself unequal to my meditated recantation."

Celia was confused; yet she summoned courage to say, "that it was the sincerity of her *esteem* for every branch of his family that made her so readily admit his visit."

"You are consistent, Celia," said the unguarded Berton; "your manners are as

unaffected

unaffected as your person is natural. I wish you would believe me when I say, that my *recent* disparagement of myself, my unsophisticated recrimination, was more the effect of *emulation* than a *deserved* humiliation, believe me, so true to *your* worth, that in soaring to your favour, the striking *contrast* rather rose out of my *love* than my errors. I have reflected on it with inconceivable anguish, and trembled lest I had planted distrust, where it would be my pride, my *happiness*, to ask a softer feeling."

"I will not affect to misunderstand you, Sir," said our heroine; "the preference of a man of honour deserves our thanks. Not an expression that regarded yourself, in our late conference, could influence my reply. I should lament *any* cause that could deduce from *your* internal peace, with the sincerity of friendship; but when I avow this, I would be understood as candid in declaring, that I *could* not accord you a more flattering distinction."

"You

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S S...

"You believe me unworthy," said Berton; "I know the purity of your character, the morality of your education."

"My education," said Celia, "was moral; and as such, I would not deceive you in so important a truth—consider me as a friend," and she extended her hand to the despairing Berton—"believe me unworthy of your love, because my heart is not interested as it should be, as it *must* be, if I *ever* change my state."

"I must believe you," said Berton, as he pressed the hand of our heroine; "I thank you for your candour; but you will not reject my visits—I may see you, Celia?"

"Assuredly," said Celia; "I should be sorry to lose a friend, because I esteemed him too well to deceive him."

"Adieu!—believe me grateful, though wretched," said Berton, as he hastily retired.

The rejection, though one in which the *heart* of Celia took no interest, was cause

of some disquiet to her. Lady Berton had avowed herself as desirous of receiving our heroine into her family, had, with the tenderness of a mother, illustrated numberless traits of character, that *really* pertained to her son—"Yet," said Celia, "am I not more worthy of her continued regard, than if I had been insincere? Lady Berton is liberal, she will hear my reasons, and allow them just."

The billet of the unknown rose on her remembrance—"Would I could trace this child of sorrow!" said Celia, as she again perused the unconnected characters. It was yet in her hand, when Richard entered, and presented a letter. Celia broke the seal, and read as follows:—

"I CAN believe you *love* him, but do not marry *yet*—a little while, a *very* little while, and it will be no matter. Many would think that *I*, who am cast from his heart, would learn to *hate* him—they

they never loved. In pity's name, do not marry *yet*."

The same obscurity prevailed—neither name nor place of abode were subscribed. "This," said Celia, "is some credulous child of wretchedness, the victim of man's art: but to *whom* does she refer? is it Berton?" asked Celia mentally: "it must be him; his *late extenuation* could not efface his former strong avowal of *error*." *She* had been seen with him often; their association had been that of early friendship. "But who is this sufferer?" and again she concluded by the vague wish—"Would I could trace thee! for assuredly *I* could set your heart at peace in this particular."

Our heroine's promise to Mrs. Welgrave standing in force, she summoned Richard to attend her. They had proceeded up Baker-street, and were making an angle, to expedite their progress towards Devonshire-place, when Mr. Belford, alighting

from a hackney-coach, impeded her path; he looked embarrassed—"Think on what I have said," said he to a female who sat in the carriage.

Celia intuitively looked into the vehicle; she beheld a female weeping, and a girl, whose appearance seemed that of a domestic, seated on the opposite side. To the utter astonishment of Celia, Richard, with a familiar air, nodded at the girl.

Our heroine passed on; Mr. Belford, with his usual politeness, walking by her side.

On arriving at Mrs. Welgrave's, she was ushered into a small drawing-room, in which she found her amiable friend employed, with her daughters, in needle-work. The young people were diffident in their manners; and Celia thought, even in the transient view she had of their retreat (for the appearance of their governess left Mrs. Welgrave at liberty to retire with her visitor), that the wisdom

of

of the *mother* was conspicuous, in the modest simplicity and unostentatious display of *learning* that the room exhibited.

Mr. Belford was reading when the ladies entered. Casting the book on one side—"You had a visitor this morning," said he, addressing Mrs. Welgrave.

"I had indeed," she replied, "a sorrowing one; how ill he looks! it was with difficulty I concealed my feelings, as I gazed on his altered person."

"It is a lamentable wreck," said Mr. Belford; "yet I hope much from his present plan."

"Welgrave is gone with him," said Mrs. Welgrave; "I have given him leave of absence for a fortnight."

Mr. Belford expressed his pleasure at the intimation, and the conversation became general.

"*You* are already apprised of the *purpose* of Miss Delacour's visit to London," said Belford, smiling.

"It is whispered——" said Mrs. Welgrave.

 "Good

"Good Heavens! I hope not," said Celia.

"Why, what were your intentions, your expectations?" asked Mrs. Welgrave, archly.

"Affection brought me hither," said Celia; "nay, binds me to lengthen my stay: it is only the *imputed* motive that I am desirous of refuting."

"You cannot do this, my good girl," said Mrs. Welgrave; "nor is it necessary you should. Had you been born in London, and educated in *its* principles, your *entré* into life would have borne the same character; and it is only disgraceful when we *marry* for *situation*, for *rank*, in place of *affection*. Why are the wardrobes of women extended, their taste displayed, but to win the lordly *captive?* I grant it should not be the ultimatum of our sex's aim; but I fear we cannot wholly exonerate ourselves from the imputation. I see you smile—you either think me a *traitor*, or a more fashionable being than you had imagined.

gined. But, my dear Miss Delacour, putting *taste* and *emulation* out of the question, were our lives destined to be hermetical, our *natural* tastes would lead us to adopt a suitable habit: it is our *humility*, however incongruous the term may seem, that induces us to *conform* in a degree; nothing but egregious *vanity* could cause us to abide by our own *opinion*, even in *dress;* and though a woman of *delicacy* will always draw a line between the *chaste* and the *present* immodest style of *decoration* or *dis-habille*, she not only pleases *herself* by its adoption, but attains the approbation of those whose opinion she values."

Celia, smiling, declared that her friend had considered her subject with much attention.

"Then you are a convert?" said Mrs. Welgrave.

"I dare not contradict you," said Celia.

"You are right," said Belford; "yet, lest your vanity should rise too high, let me acquaint you, that *your* taste is much

questioned, not only in dress, but other *essential* points—your rustic footman, your wearing pockets, your insensibility to the *personal* graces and *fashionable* notoriety of Mr. Danbury, and *other* of your slaves, are quite contrary to the usage of society; nay, they attribute all this to the narrowness of your education, *or* an *affected* singularity."

"They take infinite trouble about one who has no ambition to meet their praise," said Celia.

"My young friend reminds me of Berkley," said Mrs. Welgrave; "how strictly in union with *his* sentiments are all her opinions!"

"There is a *similarity*, no doubt," said Belford; "yet *every* reflecting man would estimate the solid qualities of such a mind;" and the crimson that flushed the cheek of Belford seemed to reproach Mrs. Welgrave for the association. "But you have actually bewildered me," said Belford; "I was desirous of acquainting Miss Delacour

of

of her *supremacy* in the line of conquests. Danbury goes to Portman-square this morning, to make his bow to Sir Harry, and ask *permission* to throw himself at the feet of his fair enslaver."

"How ridiculous!" said Celia.

"Nay, hear me out," said Belford: "Lord Quadrige, who has not done *me* the honour of a call these six months, surprised me by his presence at breakfast to-day; and after a few *preliminary* questions (quite usual in a *certain* society) confided his tender passion to my keeping—I promised secresy. 'Tush! my dear Belford,' said the conscious lover; 'I do not mean you to *treasure* my griefs, but *illustrate* them to the angelic fair one, with as much *zeal* as though *you* were the *aspiring* suitor.' 'We should *differ* in our mode of *offering*,' said I; 'excuse me.'—'I will not let you off,' said my Lord, 'I am *really* sincere, she is a very charming woman. We should be *leaders*, my dear Belford. I know half a hundred *mamas* who would be *sulky* on

the

the occasion, and not a *few misses* who would *plunge*, and be *restive*; but *that* is what we *must* expect—nay, there is infinite pleasure in disappointing these speculists. I vow to you, Belford, I would not marry from the *known* circle for the world; there is nothing to *astonish* in such a decision—the thing has been *projected*, *conned* by all the gossips in town; but when the fair creature is *brought* from a *distance*, did she want *all* the *agremens* for which the world pants, *curiosity* would give her the *eclat* that is *indispensable* in a *certain* rank. Use your interest, my dear Belford,' continued my Lord; 'for Danbury is projecting an avowal. I would have waited on Townly this morning; but, as you may perceive, (referring to his dress) we start for the first time this season, and I must be in the *Square* by —— o'clock;' and before I could reply to him, he quitted the room. How do you bear these accumulating honours?" asked Belford of our heroine.

"With

"With appropriate humility," said Celia; "nay, I fear that I am considered as *demanding* this sort of homage; for if, as I begin now to understand, if the report has gone abroad, that I am 'in search of a husband,' how ridiculous must I appear!—I cannot forgive Fanny for having *sanctioned* such an idea, by her thoughtless remark on the evening of my arrival."

"Believe me, the *badinage* of Townly does not in the slightest degree influence the public opinion. I told you, on the evening to which you allude, that you would be a candidate for favour—you perceive I was right. I forbear to offer *cues* in the present instances, because your own feelings *must* and *should* decide; I have merely *prepared* you for the *scenes* in which you must shortly take a *part*."

"Never," said Celia; "I trust they will prove the caprice of the moment, and, by saving me from all *publicity*, give me no cause to regret my visit to London."

"These are not the usual sentiments of

women of your age," said Mrs. Welgrave; "yet they are perfectly consistent with the idea I had formed of your disposition: as Belford has observed, the world will make the well *connected* and *portioned* woman the object of its *transient* favour, and, in *return*, it asks *her* to *devote* her *fortune* at its shrine; her *heart* may be held in *requisition* for *any votary* who shall *hereafter* make the claim. How you, who are an almost *stranger* to the *unlimited power* of the despot, can hope to escape his trammels, I cannot comprehend."

"I *will* think for myself," said Celia; "I was reared remote from its haunts, and with a certain contempt for its principles. Nothing that I have yet seen has displaced my early instruction; nay, I feel it to be the source of all my happiness."

"And it will *continue* to make *your* happiness," said Mr. Belford, with an impressive voice. "Shall I have the honour of attending you to Portman-square?" he continued, rising.

"Do

"Do not abridge my pleasure," said Mrs. Welgrave; "*I* will set Miss Delacour down."

Mr. Belford withdrew.

"Belford is an amiable being," said Mrs. Welgrave, "a man who is admirably qualified to make a *domestic* woman happy;" and she glanced at Celia, who, while she did justice to the excellent Belford, expressed herself with all the moderation of friendship. "I perceive *you* are indifferent to our mutual friend," continued Mrs. Welgrave; "may I ask you one question? believe me, when I say, it is not *curiosity* that induces my freedom—is George Berton a favoured lover?"

Celia replied, unhesitatingly, in the negative.

"I thank you," said Mrs. Welgrave, taking the hand of our heroine; "it is a saucy privilege that I have asked, that of probing your heart; but I *am presuming* in my friendships, and on our *first* meet-

ing,

ing, I felt assured that I could love you as a sister."

Celia declared herself flattered by the avowal, which she *yet* must believe her *due*, as having, from the minute of her introduction, been desirous of her esteem.

The remainder of our heroine's visit was passed in social conversation, uninterrupted by those *intrusive* calls, which ever destroyed the probability of *society* in Portman-square.

Celia used an early opportunity, after her return, to enquire of Richard, by what means the two letters she had received from her anonymous correspondent came into *his* hands, as there were no *post* marks?

"The little girl in the coach that Mr. Belford got out of, brought them both," said Richard.

Celia owned strong surprise; she paused —"If she should come again," said our heroine, "beg her to wait till I write an answer."

Richard

Richard promised to regard her order, and retired.

"Belford!" said Celia, "is it possible? yet I heard him tell the female in the coach to 'think on what he had said'—and *she* was in tears: it cannot be; he is a moral man, one who condemns the weaknesses of the dissipated—could *he* be the destroyer of innocence?—no, I will not believe it," said Celia; yet, assuredly, the *letter* might equally *apply* to Belford, who was almost an *inmate* in Portman-square, and *her* constant attendant.

Our heroine could not dismiss the subject from her mind; when she attributed errors to Berton, she had not considered the application illiberal—he had convicted himself, and was considered, even by those who esteemed him, as a man devoted to the world—but in casting censure on Belford, there was something, to give up; it was lowering one's vanity, by admitting that we had been *deceived.*

It was near three o'clock, and Lady Townly

Townly had not made her appearance; Celia visited the nursery, and, in the company of Rachel, forgot her chagrin. A summons from her sister led Celia and her niece to her Ladyship's dressing-room.

"Will you give Rachel an airing," said Lady Townly, "and purchase some shrubs for me?"

Celia assented, and proceeded to the New Road, to choose the plants. She had walked some time in the grounds, Rachel at one moment with, and in the next at a considerable distance from our heroine. Celia had pursued her down a path, when, on coming to one of those temporary, or rather *moveable* recesses, usual in such grounds, she found Rachel in conversation with a female.

"Are you unhappy?" said the child; "I have got a pocket," and she referred to this unfashionable appendage, for *what she* considered a certain cure for all sorts of trouble.

"Sweet child," said the stranger.

Celia took the hand of her niece—"You are troublesome, I fear," said our heroine, and she endeavoured to draw the little prattler away.

"Take this," said Rachel, laying all the money she possessed on the lap of the stranger.

"You will pardon the zeal of my little friend," said our heroine, as she made Rachel comprehend that she was wrong.

The stranger seemed deeply affected by the artless manner of the child; and as she restored the offered gift to Rachel, she said, with a sigh—"I wish *mine* was a sorrow that could be thus healed."

Celia regarded the speaker; she did not seem *more* than twenty years of age; her face was pallid and interesting; her figure light and elegant, but evidently emaciated. She arose, and curtsying to our heroine, proceeded with a slow pace down one of the walks.

"She is afflicted in mind," said Celia, and her heart impelled her to follow, and,

if possible, lead her into conversation. Again she hesitated; there was something *indelicate,* in breaking in upon the sorrows of a stranger. She had dismissed the intention, when, on looking round, she perceived a book laying on the seat. Concluding it belonged to the young sufferer, she hastened after her, and, with a condescension at once the grace and charm of her character, presented it to her.

The stranger blushed, and, as she received it from the hand of Celia, a tremor, near to fainting, overpowered her.

"You are ill," said Celia; "lean on me; can *I* be serviceable?" and she turned her glistening eyes towards those of her silent companion.

"You could not cure a broken heart," said the trembling speaker, and her countenance assumed a wild, yet most expressive meaning.

"The term is too extensive, too hopeless, for one so young," said Celia; "forgive me, if I add, it is *wrong* to yield wholly

wholly to those ills which are inflicted for our *good*—we are not to be faint, as one without hope."

"*I* dare not hope," said the stranger, in an agony of tears.

At this moment a man wheeled a barrow, with the shrubs selected by our heroine—"Where shall I send them, Madam?" said the man.

"To Lady Townly's, Portman-square," said Celia.

The stranger loosed the arm that had supported her, and, ere Celia could prevent it, fell senseless at her feet. The gardener helped her to raise the poor sufferer, who, by the aid of a smelling-bottle, was restored.

"Are you subject to these attacks?" said Celia.

"I am better *now*," said the shrinking invalid, resisting the offices of Celia; and, in a faltering voice, thanking her for her kindness, tottered down the walk, with a precipitation that alarmed our heroine, who

who believed it impossible she could reach the house.

"Follow that lady," said Celia to the gardener; "if she lives near, either see her home, or get some person to attend her—*I* will wait your return."

The man obeyed; and as Celia turned from the fragile blossom of *nature*, the *plant* endowed with *vital* essence, to the *flowerets cultured* by the hand of *man*— "How *strong* is the similarity!" said the fair moralist; "what *perishable* beings we are! 'the storm passeth over *thy* sweetness," and she took a *bud* from the fragrant rose, "and thou art no more the *pride* of the garden—while the creatures of *thy* mercy, Oh eternal Father! bask in thy favour, unconscious of the *coming* storm; and when it *overtakes* us, we despond, because the *sunbeam* does not *always* bless our path—poor sufferer," continued Celia, "*I* would not dare to *censure thee*—but why, oh why did you turn from the voice of friendship?"

With

With an anxiety unprecedented, our heroine awaited the return of the gardener; at length his appearance gladdened her heart; she advanced to meet him—"How is the lady?" said Celia.

"Poor thing!" said the man, "she's monstrous weak; I saw her home; she lives just by, at one of the houses in yonder row," and he pointed to a row of new-built houses, on the north side of the New Road. "She was forced to lean on me all the way—a physician brought her *here* one day, and asked master to give her leave to walk in the grounds of a morning, so she comes every day."

"What is her name?" asked Celia.

"Why, I cannot tell," said the man; "for you must know, Ma'am, that *this* is a queerish sort of a neighbourhood—and, perhaps, that young person, though, *to* be sure, she *looks* very modest, yet mayhap she is not quite a proper sort of woman for *you* to notice; but I have children of my own; God forbid I should hurt any

young woman's character—but, somehow or other, it happens to strike *me* that she is not a *married* woman; yet she has a little boy, as fine a child as ever I saw."

"I hope you are mistaken," said Celia, mildly; and giving the man a *douceur* for his trouble, she repaired home.

Our heroine could not shake off the languor that oppressed her spirits, and, on meeting Mr. Belford at dinner, the anonymous letter rose on her imagination—Richard's avowal, of the girl in the hackney-coach being the *same* who delivered the letter, and her recent interview with a female, whom she was inclined to think, with the *gardener*, a victim to the arts of man, formed a chain so complex, yet oppressive, as to cause a relaxation of that unequivocal cordiality she ever evinced towards the amiable Belford.

Belford saw the change; he was at some trouble to trace a probable cause for it; but conscious integrity made him certain of himself, and, for the first time since his acquaint-

acquaintance with Celia, he thought he had discovered something *like* caprice. He endeavoured to rally her spirits; he opposed the most conciliating manner towards her; and, in spite of the prejudice she had imbibed, brought her to smile.

"There is nothing like *levity* in this man," said Celia, mentally; "it is the cheerfulness of a *pure* mind—I will *not* believe it," and she grew insensibly attentive to his conversation.

Richard once more appeared, and, presenting a note, made an awkward sign, as implying that the bearer waited.

Lady Townly laughed aloud—"What project have you deputed your Scrub to perform?" said she, addressing Celia.

Our heroine, looking towards her sister, seemed to ask her forbearance, and, advancing to the window, broke the seal—the letter ran thus—

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI ... TANJORE

"Were you conscious that your humanity was this morning directed towards the lost Jessy, your bold correspondent? I will not say that it has *humbled* me more than it ought, because *virtue* should always feel its superiority; yet I blush to own it has depressed me beyond expression. I could not rest until I told *you*, Madam, that a *woman*, situated as *I* am, has no claim to the countenance of a woman of honour—and though *you* are the cause of *all* my present misery, there was a gentleness in your manner, that strongly induced me to confide in you—for *I* have now no *friend*; not a creature cares for the wretched Jessy. I had a father and a mother—do they live? I dare not think of that. Let me entreat of you not to marry him *yet*. Perhaps at this moment he is with you—I know it is easy to believe all he says; *you* may believe him; you are his *equal*—and I believed him, but not *to-day*. He grieves to see me *dying*—yet *he* is my murderer—do not tell him

this—

this—he would be angry, and that would hasten my end, and shorten the *repentance* of the abandoned

JESSY."

Doubt seemed certainty, as our heroine read this epistle. It appeared that the writer knew of Belford's visit—she had seen him *that* morning. Celia knew this, for *she* saw him descend from the coach—"And was it thee, thou poor sufferer?" said Celia, mentally; "was it thee, whom chance threw in my way this day?"

Had she followed the impulse of her heart at that moment, it would have induced her to place the *convicting* epistle in the hands of the seducer; and ask of him, where was that *benevolence*, that *morality*, of which he could talk so plausibly?—"Judge not," said conscience; and Celia actually blushed at her hasty, though *silent* censure.

Telling

Telling Richard to say she would answer the note immediately, she retired for the purpose; but ere she had penned a line, Patty hastened to inform her, that the girl was gone, having declared that she *must* not stop. There yet remained a clue; and resolving, through the man at the nursery-grounds, to effect her purpose, she returned to the drawing-room.

To the solicitations of Lady Townly and the Baronet, who wished her to attend *one* party this evening, our heroine offered as excuse, her wish of writing to Hadley, and a want of spirits to join in company.

"What has deranged you so much?" said Lady Townly. "I really believe, Celia, that you *fear* to meet Danbury, after his lover's confession—or, are you not the dupe of some ingenious hypocrite, who *has*, through your *philanthropic* friend, Mrs. Welgrave, learned your character, and attacked your silly *feelings*?"

"Neither," said Celia; "I would not

go

go into company, with my mind so little disposed to cheerfulness; it would be an ill compliment to your friends. Mrs. Welgrave's esteem I consider invaluable; though, at present, I must believe *her* as much a stranger to the *cause* of my depression as yourself."

"Remember, Fanny," said the Baronet, "Celia shall act for herself; *we* have no authority to influence her *acceptance* or *refusal* of any invitation."

"But, to-night, my dear Townly, I had promised myself great pleasure, in taking her to Lady Bridoon's *squeeze;* I must make a party, if only to *devour* the *scanty* supply of confectionary that she always displays: I have infinite pleasure in teazing the old quiz—And at Bruton's, it will be highly amusing, to see how she swallows *all* the flattery that is offered; yet, to do her justice, her *rooms* are in the first style of magnificence — that's right, my dear Harry, I want three lamps, and half a thousand *novelties,* for to-morrow evening—I

cannot

cannot open my doors, unless you comply; so think of this," said her Ladyship, as she withdrew to her toilet.

Our heroine retiring soon after, followed Lady Townly to her dressing-room; and simply stating the remarks she had heard Mrs. Bruton utter respecting her Ladyship, asked if she purposed to keep terms with such a woman?

"Mere badinage, my dear Celia; what *I* have said, half a hundred times, of *all* my acquaintance; in fact, Bruton is justified in what she says, for I *have* been very *shabby* this season; but it is not *too late*—I will astonish the town ere long."

"I should regret that I caused you to use so absurd a refutation," said Celia; "what happiness can the applause of the multitude possibly bestow, comparable with the comfort of retirement, the approval of your excellent Townly?"

"I have been so good for the last month," said her Ladyship, "that unless you give me my *parole*, I begin to fear

that

that I should dwindle into a mere wife—no, positively, Celia, restraint, *uniform* restraint, would wholly unfit me for society; nay, I even *now* feel almost *too* lazy to dress."

"Send your apologies in the morning," said Celia, with warmth, "and let us return to that society which you are so well disposed to appreciate."

"Not to-night, Celia," said her Ladyship; "I feel assured there will be much to laugh at—besides, some of the —— will be there, and I enjoy to see Bruton, all eye, asking *admiration*, following her guests with a feigned humility, and regretting that the very superior taste of the Marchioness of —— being displayed on the *same* evening, must necessarily *thin* her rooms; and while we are assuring her that *we* only regret it, as drawing us from *her* attractive sphere, we are secretly resolving to go off in groupes, in order to make her feel in *reality* what she *affects* to deplore."

"Are

"Are these the actual motives with which you attend *such* parties?" asked Celia.

"*Bona fide*," said her Ladyship; "Cardonnel and I have done wonders in this way, and never been detected."

"I could be tempted to betray you," said Celia, with a languid smile, "in the hope that their just indignation would cause you to be *omitted* in their future invitations."

"I do not fear you," said Lady Townly; "you have not *courage* for such an undertaking."

Celia believed she had not; and finding neither advice or encouragement could effect her wish of detaining her Ladyship at home, she left her to pursue her pleasure, and, in the retirement of her chamber, sat down to write to Mrs. Mansfield: this done, she wrote a few lines, expressive of that compassion which her bosom owned for the erring Jessy—"If I can afford you any comfort," said our heroine, in the close

close of her letter, "command me. I will not shrink from any difficulty which you shall impose; if you choose a *personal* interview, I will meet you at the nursery-grounds; if you prefer communication by letter, I will reply to you; but the ambiguity you use with regard to the person to whom your letter refers, gives me no *direct* means of answering you at present. I can assure you, if it will give peace to your mind, that *I* am under no *engagement* of the sort to which you allude; but shall, in all cases, own sincere pleasure in being allowed to mitigate such portion of your anxiety, as you shall deem it fit to confide to me."

This letter she resolved on taking with her the ensuing morning, when, if the unfortunate Jessy was not in the garden, she purposed dispatching it by the gardener, and waiting the result.

In spite of all her efforts to the contrary, there yet appeared too much reason to believe that Belford was the person in question;

question; under this impression, she felt it impossible to return to the drawing-room: taking her coffee from the hands of Patty, she sat listening to the departure of the carriage—"What a system of duplicity!" said the unfashionable Celia, as she heard it go off. "Is it not malicious to enter a room with apparent cordiality, yet owning the intentions so lately avowed by my sister? I cannot believe *she* thinks it so, or she could not practise it; but how can she gloss *such* conduct? Perhaps *this* wretched girl," said our heroine, regarding the epistle intended for her applicant, "though a victim to the perfidy of man, would blush to act thus. She *has* been deceived, and has undoubtedly *deceived* herself—it is a single error—I am persuaded it is a single error—there is all the *shame*, all the *despair* of a good mind—she wants hope; *there* she is wrong. I will see her," said Celia, all the piety of her character emanating on her countenance; "we will explore the sacred page

5 together;

together; she shall learn that there is 'joy in Heaven over the penitent;' we will ask it for one who has 'erred, and is deceived,' and He will incline unto our prayer."

Who, that had seen Celia thus fervent for a stranger, an erring child of mortality, but would have comprehended, that early habits of piety are the sure comfort of advancing life; that

> "On *piety*, humanity is built,
> And on humanity, much happiness;
> And yet still more on piety itself.
> A soul in commerce with her God is Heaven;
> Feels not the tumults and the shocks of life,
> The whirls of passions, and the strokes of heart."

"Many," says the *worldly* reader, "many would justly *condemn* that zeal which Celia Delacour accorded to a frail sister."

"Why?" asks the uninformed children of nature. The answer is simple—In raising and upholding a being like Jessy, the *act* is *retired*—all *publicity* would destroy the good to be derived from it—it would not

be possible that the deed could be blazoned—the known *humanity* of my Lady ——, the amiable philanthropy of the Earl of ——, may do something towards filling the newspapers—but to heal the anguish of the creature who sighs in secret—to bid the weeping penitent " go sin no more," are exclusively the province of the pure in heart, the moral, the *religious* character, who " vaunteth not," neither is guile found in his heart—it is the free untutored mind, unlearned in *thy* school, oh glittering, deceiving world!—but purely *taught*, in the principles of that *faith*, of which we *all* believe ourselves pupils, while, if our *vanity* did not blind us, we should feel that we were truants, arrant *truants*.

END OF VOL. I.

TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

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